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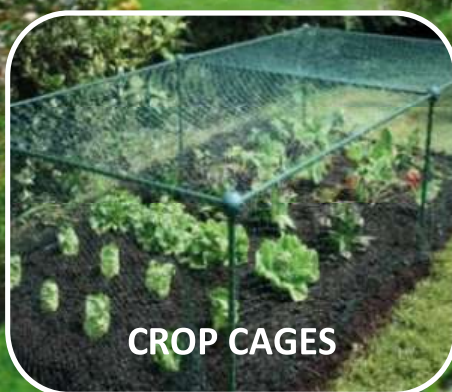
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I write this having just spent a delightful four days attending the Southport Flower Show where the weather may not have been perfect (the showground received a thorough soaking over the weekend), but the welcome from the gardeners of Southport was very warm indeed. Our question time sessions are as much about the fun as the gardening questions themselves, and the team was joined by gardening celebrities Joe Swift, Christine Walkden and Matthew Wilson who did a wonderful job of entertaining the crowds.

In this issue we have some really great advice on caring for your plot this autumn including how to harvest and store your produce from organic gardening guru Charles Dowding. You'll also find four pages of tips from our online community on coping with the inevitable tomato mountain – advice I'll be avidly following myself, having come back to a greenhouse full of ripening fruit.

We also have growing guides on garlic, pears and Brussels sprouts as well as how to save cash by making your own liquid feeds and fruit tree supports.

Steve

Steve Ott, editor

Contact me at: sott@mortons.co.uk | 01507 529396

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YOUR EXPERTS IN THIS ISSUE INCLUDE:



JOE MAIDEN

This month veteran veg grower, writer and broadcaster Joe turns his attention to a relatively modern technique – that of using seed tapes to produce crops. Good idea or expensive folly? See page 34 to find out.



ANNE SWITHINBANK

Anne's a regular panellist on Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time and a respected authority on fruit and veg growing. This month she reveals her top 10 lesser-grown but tasty fruits. See page 68 to find out more.



MARIE-CLAIRE KIDD

Gardening writer Marie-Claire visits a plot with a difference. This one, based near Ripon in North Yorkshire, is home to a thriving forest garden that is helping to make productive use of marginal land.



BOB FLOWERDEW

Organic gardening expert Bob is also a regular contributor to Radio 4's Gardeners' Question Time. He can be found in KG every month bringing his unique expertise to your gardening queries.



TONY FLANAGAN

KG's staff writer Tony has been very busy this month. As well as writing features he has put a range of cleaning products through their paces. See page 86 to discover which ones performed the best.



ANNA PETTIGREW

Expert chef and food photographer Anna brings us some more of her delicious and original recipes starting on page 98. This month she turns the spotlight on those autumn favourites, celeriac, kale and apples.

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EXPERT ADVICE TO HELP YOU GROW GREAT FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



★ ON THE COVER



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News of the best new products and services to reach the KG offices this month including irrigation kit, tool racks and tools, kids' garden furniture and a kitchen gadget you won't want to be without!



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JOBS THIS MONTH

TASKS TO CARRY OUT ON YOUR PATCH AND UNDER COVER IN OCTOBER



10-MINUTE JOBS FOR OCTOBER

TIDY AWAY CANES

Supports used for beans, tomatoes and sweet peas can be stored away for the winter. The base of the supports can be dipped into a garden disinfectant (see page 86). This can help prevent disease being carried over to the crop the following year. Then bundle up the canes and tie up to store away.

SOW BROAD BEANS

Broad beans can be sown in the autumn to give you an early crop next June. Choose a hardy autumn sowing variety such as 'Aquadulce Claudia'. This variety will overwinter as small plants and grow away quickly in spring. Cover with cloches in particularly harsh weather and to keep pests at bay.

PICK UP WINDFALLS

Collect windfall apples and use them to make a juice. Wash them and cut away any bad parts. Cut into quarters and place in a large pot with a little water. Boil and simmer for about 20 minutes. Mash up the apples, put them in a colander lined with cheesecloth and hang it over a deep pot. The juice is delicious and healthy.

MAKE A LOG PILE

As you clean up the garden you may find branches and twigs which can be put together to create a log pile and a home to many beneficial insects and larger creatures such as frogs and newts. Place the pile under a tree, behind a shed or beneath a hedge. You may even be lucky and encourage some stag beetles.

HARVEST SQUASHES

The foliage of winter squashes may be dying back now which is a good time to harvest. Also this month may see the first frosts in some places. Even a light touch will be enough to stop squash from keeping. On the other hand, in our marginal climate they need every day of sun they can get to mature fully, develop their full flavour and make the hard skins that enable them to store well. Keep a close eye on the weather forecast and as soon as frost is predicted cut the squash leaving about 5cm (2in) of stem. Move your squash inside for a few days or somewhere where the temperature is about 14C (57F). This helps cure the skin to harden it and enable the squash to be stored. Once they have had about 10 days or so at these warmer temperatures they can be moved to a cooler environment such as a shed or garage or a cool room in the house. Butternut should keep for two or three months; 'Crown Prince'/'Blue Hubbard' types can keep for nine months.



SOW NOW

Salad leaves, rocket, winter lettuce, early peas, broad beans



PLANT NOW

Garlic, onion sets, spring cabbages, winter lettuce, rhubarb



HARVEST NOW

Carrots, potatoes, beetroot, onions, garlic, celery, celeriac, parsnips, swiss chard, lettuce, salsify, scorzonera, spinach, swedes, apples, pears, cauliflowers, oriental cabbages, savoy and winter cabbages, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, turnips, tomatoes (early in the month), cucumbers/summer squashes (early in the month), winter squashes, sweetcorn

ON THE VEG PATCH



USING CLOCHES

Cloches, cold frames and winter weight fleece are great materials to use at this time of year to help protect leafy crops such as lettuce, salad leaves etc. The covers can keep them in good condition for harvesting and to help insulate the soil and protect new plantings, such as onions, from the attention of birds and the weather.

There are lots of cloche kits, large and small, readily available or you can make your own relatively easily from strong wire, string and polythene or thick fleece.

KG TOP TIP

As you start to clear and dig the soil in preparation for next season's plantings, check for any potatoes that may have been left behind when lifting, no matter how small. These are a potential source of blight disease next year and a nuisance when they pop up in rows of spring-sown seedlings.

TOMATOES

This crop may be coming to an end now. If you still have a lot of green fruit then it is worth waiting a bit longer, otherwise consider harvesting green and turning them into a green chutney (see recipe on page 70). Outdoor-grown tomatoes that have not succumbed to blight but are just starting to ripen could be helped by unstaking, laying on the ground and covering with a cloche. It may help to fully ripen nearly ripe fruit.



BEANS

Some bean pods can be allowed to mature so you can collect and save the seed for the following year. Heritage and varieties that are not F1s can be saved. You may get mixed results from the seeds if you have grown a couple of varieties which have cross-pollinated. If the weather is predicted to worsen you could lift the plants with the beans still on the stems and hang in a garage or shed to dry there.



LETTUCE

Sow hardy winter lettuce such as 'Winter Gem'. This is a Cos-type lettuce that can be grown undercover now. 'Winter Crop' is even hardier and can be overwintered outside. All outdoor-grown winter lettuce will benefit from being covered with cloches or fleece. The young plants will not put on too much growth in the depths of winter but will grow away quickly in spring.



SOW ROCKET

There is still time to sow quick-growing salad leaves such as rocket outside this month for harvesting in four to six weeks' time. Sow direct in the soil in a short row or alternatively in pots or troughs and cover with fleece or a choche to protect against the cold and also pests such as flea beetles.



TOP TIP

Digging clay soil

If you garden on heavy soil you may find a time in autumn when it is perfect to dig. Delay and it may become too wet and you will have to leave it until spring. Work with your soil as and when it allows.

REUSE BAGS

You can reuse growing bags that have had tomatoes or other crops in them. Remove the rootballs and as much root as you can. It will not matter if you leave a little of the finer roots. Break up the compost and mix in some Growmore or chicken manure pellets. Soak the bags and leave to drain. If there are two or three holes already cut out you could sow into these or cut the whole of the top out to give a larger growing surface. Loosen the surface of the compost and sow hardy salad leaves such as mizuna, lamb's lettuce or winter lettuce. You could use up packets of brassica seed or other leafy crops. Place in a greenhouse or cold frame or mini greenhouse.



QUICK JOBS FOR FRUIT GROWERS

■ CLEAN STRAWBERRIES

If you haven't done this already now is a good time to tidy up strawberry beds. Remove any weeds among the strawberry plants and also any unwanted runners and old leaves. Removing the leaves can reduce the potential for overwinter disease. Any old straw mulches can be removed too.

■ TAKE CUTTINGS

Hardwood cuttings of fruit bushes can be taken now such as gooseberries, blackcurrants, grapevines and blueberries. Select healthy shoots and trim down to 23-30cm (9-12in),

making a sloping cut at the bottom just below a leaf joint and a straight cut at the top just above a joint (so you can tell which way up to plant). Dip into some rooting hormone powder or liquid and bury the bottom two-thirds of the stem in the ground in a slit trench made with a spade. The cutting should be rooted and can be lifted in about a year's time.

■ ORDER FRUIT

It is a good time to order fruit from specialist suppliers. A lot of bare-rooted trees are lifted and sent out to customers from November to March.

DO IT NOW

- When you cut cabbages leave some stems in the ground and cut a cross in the top of the stem. They will regrow giving you a bonus of leaves to harvest.
- Pick up fallen rotting fruit from the ground as they may harbour pests such as codling moth.
- Protect developing curds of cauliflowers by bending some leaves over them.
- Start planting garlic now for a crop next summer.
- Remove yellowing leaves from kale, broccoli and Brussels sprouts. Also stake these taller brassicas if you live in a windy spot.
- If you fancy growing mushrooms now is a good time to try. Many seed suppliers sell mushroom kits.



PRUNE BLACKCURRANTS

Blackcurrants fruit best on wood which was produced last season. The easiest way to prune very mature blackcurrants is simply to remove the fruiting stems, fruit and all in July and to take them indoors where the fruit can be stripped. However this is a little drastic for young plants or those which are struggling a little and here pruning can take place from now until February when the plants start back into growth again.

On established plants cut out up to three of the oldest shoots to within a few inches of ground level to encourage new shoots to arise from the base. The rest of the fruited branches are cut back to healthy sideshoots which are preferably growing outwards from the centre of the bush. Cut any weak or diseased growths back to a healthy bud. When the leaves fall rake them up from around the base of the plant and remove any weeds.



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TOP TIPS FOR OCTOBER

- Use stakes to support tall plants like purple sprouting broccoli. There's no wind to shake them under cover, but roots can be less robust for the very same reason
- Cover tender plants with an extra layer if temperatures dip to low single figures for a brief period. They should still crop if temperatures rise again
- Be ruthless in the hunt for diseased leaves and plants. Remove them before the problem becomes embedded
- Good ventilation will help reduce problems with grey mould



Provide supports for sprouting broccoli plants

IN THE GREENHOUSE



WITH
JOYCE
RUSSELL

Pictures by
Ben Russell



SOWING PEAS

You can sow round-seeded podding peas, like 'Meteor', in October. You will get the earliest crops in this way, but these varieties are never as sweet as their spring-sown cousins and they don't crop so well. If you have plenty of space under cover then go for it, but mangetout varieties are my favourites to sow at this time. 'Oregon Sugar Pod' and 'Herald' are excellent performers for standing through the winter. Both will produce an abundance of tasty sweet pods from April onwards.

TOMATO VARIETIES

Some plants may be struggling at this point, but others keep cropping strongly with little sign of disease. Make a note of which varieties did best for you and which ones didn't do so well. An unsuccessful cropper takes up just as much room as a successful one. In my polytunnel, beefsteak varieties and cherry ones seem to keep cropping later than the middle-sized ones.



SOWING & GROWING TIPS

■ You can still sow rows of salad leaves if the weather is mild. Once the seedlings are up they will stop growing at low temperatures, but growth will start again when soil temperatures are above 6°C (43°F).

■ Slugs can be a problem with young carrot and lettuce plants. Check under pots and go out with a torch after dark if you want to be sure to catch particular culprits.

■ Cucumbers and courgettes will usually finish cropping in October. Remove plants and spread any remaining manure from a hotbed round cabbage and broccoli plants.

■ Remove any fallen plant debris and keep soil as clean as possible.

HARVEST HINTS

■ The glut of summer fruit and vegetables will start winding down as temperatures drop. This doesn't mean there won't be plenty to pick!

■ Peppers and aubergines can be at peak production this month. Harvest when they are ripe, but firm enough to enjoy at their best. Aubergines soften if they are over-ripe; seeds are bigger and the flesh can be bitter if they are left too long on the plant.

■ Sample chilli peppers with caution: heat levels can vary in peppers from the same plant.

■ Peppers can be invaded by slugs and earwigs. These creatures enter through a tiny hole and the pepper starts to rot from the inside out. Be vigilant and pick what you need to eat each day if you want to enjoy peppers fresh and firm from the plant.

■ Basil seldom lasts in an unheated space beyond the middle of October. Plants look tatty, shoots try to flower and the flavour isn't as good as in earlier months. Harvest the lot and make pesto for the freezer before leaves turn brown and fall off the plants.

■ Rows of winter salad leaves can grow fast and furious in a mild autumn. You can't hold them back and if you don't start to harvest then plants are likely to bolt. Keep cutting – a second and third flush of leaves may be your reward.

Harvest when fruit is firm and ripe



SOWING & PLANTING GUIDE

	FAVOURITE VARIETIES	HOW TO START
EARLY CARROTS	'Amsterdam Forcing', 'Early Nantes'	Sow early in the month, thinly in rows, or in 25cm (10in) pots of good compost.
MANGETOUT PEAS	'Oregon Sugar Pod'	Sow direct or in pots.
BROAD BEANS	'Aquadulce Claudia'	Sow late in the month in rows or individual 8cm (3in) pots.
KOHL RABI	'Azur Star', 'Olivia', 'Noriko', 'Kolibri'	Plant out pot-raised plants. 15cm (6in) apart in rows 30cm (12in) apart.
SPINACH	Perpetual (crops fast from late sowings)	Start in trays, or sow 1cm (½in) deep in drills and thin to 20cm (8in) apart.
LETTUCE	'Winter Density', 'Veneziana', 'Valdor', 'Lattughino', 'Winter Gem'	Plant out 20cm (8in) apart in rows 30cm (12in) apart.
SALAD LEAVES	Rocket, Mizuna, Land Cress, Mustard Greens, Purslane etc	Sow directly in drills 1cm (½in) deep, 30cm (12in) apart.
AUTUMN PLANTING GARLIC	'Vallelado', 'Messidrome', 'Early Purple Wight'	Plant individual cloves 15cm (6in) apart for the earliest garlic.

GETTING THE MOST FROM HERBS

■ You can keep up a good supply of herbs through the winter by planting some of your favourites under cover. Parsley plants, put in the border now, will soon form large bushy plants. These grow much faster than any outdoors and you can harvest bumper crops right through until June if space allows (at which stage parsley and walnut pesto is a delight).

■ Coriander also does well through the winter and chives will continue to produce useable shoots in the greenhouse. Grow mint in a pot, so it doesn't take over and you can have small tangy leaves right through the winter months.

■ I always bring a rosemary plant into the greenhouse. This enjoys the extra protection through the coldest weather. Plants in pots can go back outside in spring.



Plant parsley under cover and it will crop for months

LAMB'S LETTUCE

This delicious salad plant is easy to grow and can be sown in October for an early supply next year. Sow seed thinly in broad drills and just cover with soil. A layer of crop-cover can aid germination if nights are cold. Harvest when plants are about 10cm (4in) in diameter and always before they start to bolt. Pick the whole plant and nip off the stem just above the roots. Wash well to get any dirt from the folds.



TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Sweet peas are a favourite flower in many gardens and October sowing can give you bountiful blooms. Sow seed under cover this month and you can have flowers next May. Plants can be grown on in the greenhouse, to ramble through vines etc, or they can be planted outdoors in late winter. In sheltered gardens, in mild areas, you can sow directly outdoors, but the protection of a greenhouse ensures good germination and strong young plants.



HOT TOPICS

NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF GROWING YOUR OWN FRUIT AND VEG

HERITAGE AT HELIGAN

The Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall will be celebrating heritage fruit, vegetables, traditions and colours with Heligan Harvest – A Taste of Our Heritage taking place September 19 to October 4.

As in previous years, visitors to Heligan can experience a harvest display produced from the Victorian Productive Gardens. The produce will be prepared and served in home-made, seasonal dishes in the Heligan Tearooms.

Heligan managing director, George Elworthy, said: "Harvest is one of the most popular times of year here at Heligan. We see the fruits of the summer's labour, and each year the display gets more ambitious."

Admission is priced at: adults £12.50, seniors £10.50, children five to 17 £6, under fives go free. For further information about the event visit www.heligan.com.



HEAD GARDENER'S TOP TIPS

Iain Davies, Heligan's head of gardens and estate, took some time out from his busy schedule to give KG readers some valuable advice on growing and harvesting:

■ Start veg/fruits off as early as you can by using cloches, tunnels or simply cover areas to warm up soil for quicker germination. In the same way grow on as late as you can. Use winter leaf crops to extend harvest.

■ There is nothing better than picking fresh herbs such as basil, dill, mint and parsley straight from your own window pots.

■ Grow as much as you can use. Too much of one crop is a waste of valuable space, time and effort. Think what you can use/store and aim to achieve that.

■ Identify what grows well in your area. Be open minded and don't get stuck in growing the latest strains! Do try a couple of new things each season. Classic varieties are still hard to beat on yield and resistance.

■ Nothing competes with sustainable, delicious and extremely nutritious home-grown produce. Getting the most out of your plot/space or containers is vital when thinking ahead to yield/harvest.

■ Successional sowing is key to a regular harvest. Sow lettuce, radish, beets etc. at fortnightly intervals. Sow varieties that have differing maturation times at the same time.

■ If you can, harvest in the morning as early as possible, when the plant is full of moisture and really nutritious. Pop leafy crops and roots into the fridge to preserve flavour.



DO YOU HAVE SOME HOT STORIES FOR OUR NEWS PAGES? SEND THEM TO TFLANAGAN@MORTONS.CO.UK

FLOATING ROB'S HONEY BOAT

Seed company Dobies Of Devon have teamed up with Big Allotment Challenge winner Rob Smith to create two new seed ranges, 'Rob's Heritage Vegetables' and 'Rob's Cut Flowers', with more than 20 varieties in each range.

A dedicated allotmentee, Rob is one of 180 seed guardians in the UK passionate about keeping heritage veg from becoming extinct. On his allotments, he grows a variety of fruit, vegetables and cut flowers, from rare squash like 'Honey Boat' to radish such as 'Long Scarlet' (Peter Rabbit's favourite variety).

Of 'Honey Boat' Rob says: "I first found this squash in California, and as far as I know, no-one else in the UK is selling this great old variety. This squash is easier to grow, and sweeter than a butternut squash. It's more productive too."

The range will also include kale 'Red Russian'. "This heritage kale forms 60-90cm plants with green/grey leaves in the shape of giant oak leaves," says Rob. "As the colder weather arrives, the leaves begin to take on a red tinge and the flavour



sweetens. Kale has been classed as a 'super food', with celebs juicing it and eating it by the bucketful."

Another variety available will be lettuce 'Crisp Mint Romaine'. "This lettuce is one of the prettiest romaine-style ones you can get. It forms compact, stately plants which are great for any salad – it's crispy with a frilly edge to the leaves. 'Crisp Mint' is so called because of the colour of its leaves, can be cut even in hot weather and won't wilt or droop before you get it home." For more on Dobies Heritage Range visit: www.dobies.co.uk

CHILLI LOVERS FLOCK TO FIESTA

Visitor numbers at West Dean Gardens' 20th Anniversary Chilli Fiesta held from August 7-9 has broken all previous records with 25,000 people in attendance.

Chilli plants were the stars of the show with talks and tours throughout the weekend around the Victorian glasshouses in the



walled garden where Sarah Wain, gardens supervisor, grows 250 varieties of chilli. Guest

gardening experts from Sea Spring Seeds, Hot Headz and Simpson Seeds gave talks in the gardening theatre throughout the weekend and recalled their first Chilli Fiesta in 1995.

"Ever since our dynamic

gardening duo, Jim Buckland and Sarah Wain, were inspired to start growing chillies in the early 1990s, these fiery plants have been a permanent feature in our Victorian glasshouses," said Alex Barron, chief executive. "Chilli Fiesta has gone from strength to strength since it began in 1995 and it was fantastic to welcome so many people to Chilli Fiesta for this special 20th anniversary year, whether for the first time or as regular West Dean festival-goers."

Visit www.westdean.org.uk for more information.

GARDENERS URGED TO SAVE NATION'S HEDGEHOGS

Wild About Gardens Week, the annual celebration of garden wildlife hosted by the Royal Horticultural Society and The Wildlife Trusts, is teaming up with Hedgehog Street this year to highlight how gardeners can help hedgehogs.

Hedgehogs are in trouble – they have declined by 30% in the last 10 years alone and there are now thought to be fewer than one million left in the UK.

To help encourage people right across Britain to think about how hedgehog friendly their gardens, schools and community spaces are, this



year's Wild About Gardens Week will form a week-long call to action and a celebration of the hedgehog, packed with events, competitions and opportunities to get stuck in.

Twiggy, Patron of the British Hedgehog Preservation Society, said: "Seeing hedgehogs in our garden when I was a child was a magical experience. Now we all need to help these special mammals – and there's so much that gardeners can do to reverse their decline.

"You can cut a small hedgehog hole at the bottom of your garden fence, leave wild nesting and hibernation areas, ditch the slug pellets and check that bonfire before striking the match! All so easy to do. Please help these wonderful creatures."

Wild About Gardens Week is from October 26 to November 1, 2015. For more information visit: www.wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk

SUPERFOOD GARDENERS

A rising number of health-conscious adults are opting to grow their own superfoods in a bid to save money and make the most of their own outdoor space, as one in four reveal that they grow their own versions of often expensive 'superfoods'.

A survey by garden and conservatory furniture retailer alfresia.co.uk has found that 26% of British adults questioned have grown superfoods such as flax seed, aloe vera and blueberries themselves in their garden, yard, balcony or window sills.

Superfoods are nutrient-rich foods, considered to be especially beneficial for health and well-being. There is some evidence to suggest that superfoods such as flax seed, wheatgrass and blueberries may help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, a stroke and diabetes. Aloe vera is said to offer protection against dental cavities and help reduce liver damage associated with alcohol abuse.

Those surveyed believed they saved around £250 per year by growing their own superfoods in the garden. The survey revealed that the most popular home-grown superfood was kale (64%) followed by sweet potatoes (52%), spinach (48%) and blueberries (33%).



NEW LOOK FOR JOHNSONS SEEDS

Johnsons Seeds, one of the UK's longest established brands with a history dating back to 1820, has given its retail seed range a completely new look for the 2016 season.



Seed packets display an improved picture of the variety and icons such as the RHS Perfect for Pollinators and RHS Award of Garden Merit. Each standard packet still includes a useful free colour plant label.

New for 2016 is Jekka's Herbs range, chosen by Jekka McVicar whose herb garden boasts the largest range of culinary herbs in the UK. The collection comprises 47 species and varieties.

Among 24 new seed varieties launched for 2016 are the exclusive marrow 'Babymax

F1', a UK-bred hybrid which produces smaller fruits than most, and tomato 'Tomtastic F1', a sweet cherry variety.

Other improvements include the expansion of Johnsons Organics range, and an increase in the number of chilli varieties offered, all now with a heat scale given on the packets to aid consumer selection.

Johnsons range of seeds is available from garden centres, supermarkets and leading DIY stores throughout the UK and at www.johnsons-seeds.com.

FRUIT EXCHANGE

Community interest business Down to Earth based in Stroud, Gloucestershire has launched a new project to make use of unwanted fruit in the region. The Fruit Exchange connects people who have surplus fruit with food outlets who can use it.

Down to Earth began as a community project to educate and encourage people to grow their own food. It quickly became aware of just how much surplus and unwanted fruit and other produce goes to waste every year.

This scheme takes unwanted or surplus perfectly good produce and gives it to businesses to use. This scheme also creates employment, volunteering and work experience opportunities and the development of new skills and education. It supports the local food economy and ensures seasonal British home-grown food is not wasted.

Director Amanda Godber, who set up the Fruit Exchange, said: "We tried to do it a

few other ways over past years. We tried drying the fruit and packaging it to sell. My kitchen ended up being the production line! It was never-ending, trucks full of apples turning up and we couldn't cope. Plus it took so long to make the final product and you can go into a health food shop and buy dried fruit from China at a fraction of the price.

"There are all sorts of fruits ripe at the moment such as gooseberries, strawberries, blackcurrants, raspberries and cherries which we are exchanging with local businesses. We even have a glut of rhubarb which is being exchanged with a cafe in Stroud this weekend! "

Down to Earth's mission is to encourage reconnection with the land, develop best practices in relation to a balanced and biodiverse environment, and support a range of growing and gardening-based self-employment opportunities.

For more information visit: www.downtoearthstroud.co.uk.



Kevin Fortey uses Costa coffee grounds to help him grow some whoppers

COSTA CABBAGE

Costa, the coffee shop chain, has launched its 'Grounds for Grounds' project, an initiative which allows customers to request used coffee grounds from their local Costa store to use in their gardens as a natural plant fertiliser. Used coffee grounds contain many essential trace elements which make up a highly successful and natural fertiliser.

Kerry Parkin, Costa's head of corporate social responsibility, said: "This is an example of Costa's ongoing commitment to making our business more sustainable. Our initiative is one of the many ways we are diverting waste from landfill while giving back to our customers."

Record-breaking giant vegetable grower Kevin Fortey said: "I have been using Costa's coffee grounds on my smallholding for some months now and I've seen a huge improvement in the quality of my vegetables."

Coffee grounds are an excellent source of slow-release nitrogen, calcium and magnesium that are greatly beneficial for the growth of plants. As well as a soil conditioner they have been used to protect plants from snails and slugs.

Customers can request the Costa Grounds for Grounds service nationwide from baristas in their local store.

You can find out more by visiting: www.costa.co.uk/responsibility/environment



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SWELL MELONS

Here is a photo of me and my 'Emir F1' melons this year. They have turned out well, as you can see. Careful pollination and removal of excess flowers and stems allowed these two fruits to grow quite big. I hope they will be tasty when they ripen too. I look forward to a tasty treat.

Ken Dean, Cambridge



★★★★★
STAR LETTER
WINS £25 VOUCHER
★★★★★



HAVE YOUR SAY

CONTACT US WITH YOUR LETTERS AND TIPS: TFLANAGAN@MORTONS.CO.UK

TOMATO BONUS

While working in my greenhouse I found a 10cm (4in) long side shoot on one of my 'Ferline' tomato plants. I removed the shoot and thought it too nice to throw away. So I just pushed it into the soil next to the parent plant. After a week or so I noticed the shoot was growing. So I potted it up into some compost and here we are on July 24, 2015 with one tomato almost ready to eat.

Brian Jordan, Kent



WATER WISE

I have been a subscriber for a number of years and look forward to the sound of the latest *Kitchen Garden* magazine dropping through my letter box. The article on making a herb spiral by Julie Moore has inspired me to build one of my own – not with herbs but with an array of plants capable of coping with a north facing garden overlooking Port Isaac Bay. I will build mine in an anti-clockwise direction since the major factor influencing water runoff is local topography or land shape. As a retired science teacher it pains me to see your otherwise informative magazine promulgating a myth.

I'm afraid the idea that water runs clockwise down the plug hole in the



northern hemisphere and anti-clockwise in the southern has no basis in fact. There is no consistency in the water flow in either hemisphere. The force that is theoretically responsible is the Coriolis effect, and this is a very tiny force. It works on wind direction in the atmosphere because the spinning Earth has a huge mass causing a

frictional force to develop in the air above it. So air masses in the northern hemisphere spiral clockwise and influence oceanic water movement (along with the sun and moon causing tides). I'm afraid small bodies of water don't tend to run clockwise in our part of the world – go check your local stream or river.

Karl Rodgers, Cornwall

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Email your letters to tflanagan@mortons.co.uk or post to Letters, Kitchen Garden, Mortons Media Group, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR



WONDER PEA

I am writing in response to the letter about pea germination in the September issue. I have tried many varieties of peas over the years and always come back to 'Kelvedon Wonder' in the end. I live in Sheffield so I am growing in similar conditions to Richard Clark in Derbyshire (KG September issue). I sow successionally. I plant individually in paper pots or plant three or four peas into 10cm (4in) diameter plant pots. I leave them in my unheated greenhouse and then move them out to the cold frame when the weather warms up a bit. I plant them into their final position when they are sturdy enough and plant a couple of rows direct into the ground at the same time. With 'Kelvedon Wonder' the germination rate is about 90% I would say and the crop produced is tasty and plentiful. I harvested 3kg of peas this year.

I would recommend 'Kelvedon Wonder' every time and my other top tip would be to put your wigwam cane supports in before you plant out the pea plants. This allows you to position your peas so that each plant has support; and you don't risk root damage by poking canes in after the plants are in the ground.

Jill Bush, Sheffield



Picture: Suttons

BROAD BEAN SERENDIPITY

Expert cooks are agreed that broad beans no larger than the size of a thumb nail are at their most succulent and yet gardeners know it is all too easy to allow beans to get too big, at which point they have

to be peeled to remove the leathery case. Quite by chance, I have found a solution to this problem. In the autumn I decided to enrich the soil in my allotment by sowing field beans (Kings Seeds), which are used as green manure. This variety of broad bean is very hardy and will survive the coldest winter. The seeds are

sown in the late autumn and the plants then dug into the ground in spring before flowering. I decided to allow some of my plants to grow on and mature and they produced a profusion of pods containing delicious beans which never grew bigger than the optimal size for cooking.

John Maule, Edinburgh



EAT DIRT, BLACKFLY!

It was with interest I read about blackfly on artichokes (KG August issue). It reminded me of a book I read by the late Fred Streeter from Petworth and broadcaster 1940-50 who said if you cover blackfly with dry soil it gets in their 'teeth' and kills them. This does actually work.

Richard Masters, Wisbech



MICE MENACE

Sown in the conventional way I have lost whole rows of peas to mice. I now sow in Rootrainers, one pea per cell, and plant them out when ready. That's a lot of Rootrainers but worth it. It sounds like hard work but isn't. Sowing at bench level is much easier. This method has been successful for the last three seasons.

David Lock, Ipswich



Kitchen Garden

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FROM THE FORUM:



PLUM PUDDING: I'd just like to say thank you for all the free seeds in the magazine. I've had an excellent crop of beetroot, the carrots are lovely, the water cress is doing very well in the greenhouse border next to the tap, and there are some interesting types of mint. I'm looking forward to trying the sweetcorn and comparing it with my usual variety. I can't remember what others I've planted but they have all grown very well.

PRIMROSE: I try to trial the free seeds wherever possible and my beetroot too seem to be doing well apart from a couple which have bolted. I have to reserve judgement on the sweetcorn though. Every seed germinated and I have nice top tassels forming on a dozen plants but as yet not the slightest sign of any cobs beginning to form. Cauliflower seedlings sadly all got eaten by pigeons within 24 hours of planting out.

WESTI: Thanks from me too KG! There have been loads this year and great varieties. I really like the look of the sprayer in this month's magazine - very cute and practical, can't wait to try it out!

Join in at www.kitchengarden.co.uk/forum

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE COMPETITION

This month the winner of our competition will receive Epic Tomatoes by Craig Le Houllier, a lavishly illustrated paperback packed with information about tomato varieties and how to grow them. A must for tomato fans. Retail price £14.99.



HOW TO ENTER:

Compare pictures A and B. See if you can spot at least 10 differences. Identify these on picture B with a circle. Complete the coupon below and return your entry by Friday, Oct 9, 2015. The first correct entry drawn after the closing date will win our prize.



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QUESTION TIME

GOT A FRUIT OR VEG PROBLEM? ASK KG FOR HELP



WITH

BOB FLOWERDEW & ANNE SWITHINBANK

KG EXPERTS & REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS TO RADIO 4'S GARDENERS' QUESTION TIME

FLOWER POWER

I have been growing for just this year. I am 16 and have found a huge amount of fun from growing my own fruit and vegetables. However, my marrow and courgette plants have been very puzzling as the female flowers have developed first and I can't pollinate them as the male flower has not bloomed yet!

Mary Salliss, via email

ANNE SAYS: Courgettes and marrows are essentially the same thing, except the courgettes have been bred to deliver higher numbers of smaller fruits. Early in the season while temperatures are still low, we usually see more male flowers. At this stage plants are still reaching a mature size and still too small to support a fruiting crop. Suddenly, plants hit their stride, the weather warms up and fruits set in almost alarming numbers until high temperatures bring about more female than male flowers. All



annuals or herbs nearby - I never bother with hand pollination. But the best idea is to have a 'pumpkin patch' and grow many squash together. As long as they are derived from *Cucurbita pepo*, other squash (patty pans, acorn squash and some pumpkins) will all be flowering at once and pollinate each other. The flowers are delicious dipped in batter and fried.

★★★★★
STAR LETTER
WINS £25 VOUCHER
★★★★★

you can do is water during dry spells and mulch around the plants. Once flowering starts, give a high potash tomato fertiliser every three weeks to encourage fruiting.

Attract insects by planting

VEG IN THE SHADOWS

I was delighted to take on the task of veg bed co-ordinator for the Summerseat Village Community this year. There are four raised beds in a clearing in a wood, but when the canopy is fully in leaf, one bed gets at best dappled shade and another gets at most a couple of hours of sunlight and is ominously developing a green mossy/algae covering. I have grown purple sprouting broccoli in my own (sunnier!) garden for several years. Would this perform OK in the summer shaded bed as once the tree canopy has fallen it

will have full sun until mid-April? I usually start off the seeds in July and plant out in their final positions in September. Any suggestions gratefully received for other crop ideas too before I am besieged by hungry villagers!

Eileen Rahulan, Bury

BOB SAYS: It is hard to get decent crops of most vegetables growing in shade and even more so during the cold of winter. In fact you would be better off forgetting vegetables and growing strawberries, red, white and blackcurrants, raspberries, blackberries and their hybrids as these are natural denizens of

woodland. The lighter period in winter will allow some hardy brassicas such as sprouting broccoli, kales and savoy cabbages to do fairly well from a late summer planting. Leeks are another possibility as most varieties grow whenever it is not freezing.

Some salad crops sown thick to harvest as leaves might do, especially if you can give them some clothes, and even better as you are sowing in cells elsewhere under cover and planting out. Most success will come from *Claytonia* (miner's lettuce), *Valerianella* (corn salad), loose leaf lettuce, winter hardy spring onions, Chinese mustards and pak choi, and rocket.



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CLOSE SHAVINGS

I have recently converted an old shrubbery into a veg patch. The soil is very light and well drained (we are on gravel). Our local riding stables sell horse manure. My concern is that they use litter (wood shavings?) instead of straw in the stalls. Would you advise using this to bulk up my soil?

Dave Powell, Essex

ANNE SAYS: The main reason for NOT doing this is of course the fear of nitrogen robbery. Particles of undecayed wood will be broken down in the soil by micro-organisms, which use nitrogen in the process, making it less available to plants. On balance, I would say use it, and I have dug plenty into our plot at home. We used to have a Shetland pony living in our garden and during extreme wet, to stop him from eating too much lush grass or being plagued by flies, we'd sometimes bring him into a stable with



shavings as bedding, though I eventually changed this to shredded non-woody miscanthus. Large quantities of organic matter will ultimately benefit your light soil and help it hold moisture and nutrients better. Keep an eye open for yellowing leaves early in the season and apply a nitrogen-rich fertiliser to compensate if necessary. During summer, horses are turned out for longer periods and their owners often collect up the dung from their fields, so you are likely to find less bedding mixed in with it.



Claytonia
or miner's
lettuce

TRY A GREEN MANURE CURE

I moved to a small, established allotment in November 2013. The occupier before me had put farmyard manure into it the previous spring and had left me a bin full of compost. This spring I forked in a mixture of all my predecessor's compost into my eight small beds.

Now, on hoeing or trying to put in stakes for tomatoes, I find that the top two or three inches are very dusty. Underneath this the soil is very hard, and there are not as many worms as there were when I took the allotment over. Does the soil need more bulk? Would green manuring help? Or what else could I incorporate into the soil?

Kathleen Hughes, Devon

BOB SAYS: I suspect your soil has become acidic with the additions, so unless you wish to grow acid lovers I suggest a heavy dose of lime (say a handful per sq yd) given every winter for the first few years then reduced to every fourth year (ideally with the legumes, before the brassicas and never with or just before the spuds).

This will encourage the worms who are still there but lying deep down till damp conditions return. Given a damp winter these will soon mix the layers up. You could also help them with dressings of composted manures such as chicken pellets, blood, fish and bone meal or seaweed meal.

Green manures are brilliant if used correctly, which means sowing them thick, incorporated early, resown and incorporated again and again. Do not let them stand and coarsen but either dig them in or cover with an opaque plastic sheet for a month or two. I recommend Claytonia, which you can eat, or *Limnanthes douglasii* which you can't, as these are much easier to incorporate than the traditional green manures which are really for farmers not gardeners.

DECKING OUT RAISED BEDS

I've just ordered a greenhouse and I intend to raise vegetables for planting outside and in the greenhouse. I have access to some lengths of decking which I am keen to recycle by using them to build raised beds. Please advise on the ideal height and if I should line the beds with anything. Also, must I use bought-in compost throughout or can I part fill with garden soil?

Philip Page, via email

BOB SAYS: If you intend putting the raised beds in the greenhouse, I would suggest you might find it easier over the years to use large plastic containers (these will need drainage holes drilling in). Under cover, pests and diseases build up more quickly so it is best to be able to change the growing medium fairly often. If these are to be outside then the medium can be regarded very much as soil which, with rotation and some enrichment, can be used for several years.

As to size and height, do not make them

more than a metre or so across so you can reach over from the sides. The length is up to you, though any longer than five metres you may find yourself scrambling over. The deeper the better though if it's standing on the ground, this allows for a shallower bed. However, if standing on the ground and without a liner, then moisture can move up to the plants. If the bed is very deep, this will be hindered and you will find you need to water more often. I suggest 60cm (2ft) is probably sufficient.

If standing on concrete or similar then drainage can be an issue, especially if you decide to line it. Lining will prevent weeds coming in but also prevents worms and similar and can aggravate the drainage. Generally, I'd line the sides with plastic sheet to help the timber last longer but prefer the bottom to be open.

I would use garden top soil for the bottom quarter to third, then a mixture of old turves, garden compost and leaf mould in the middle with a topping of commercial potting compost.



WIN GREAT PRIZES!

Are you a passionate plotter? We know KG readers love their veg plots and here we meet a couple of really keen plot holders and invite you to enter our Passionate Plotter Competition 2015

LAURA SKELTON FROM INVERARAY, ARGYLL



Do you tend to your plot on your own?

My husband, Mike, and I tend our plot together.

Do you have an allotment or veg plot in your garden?

We grow our vegetables in our own garden. We have two plots of approximately 2m x 2.5 metres and 3 metres x 5.5 metres; two polytunnels measuring approximately 4m x 4.5m and 4m x 9m; and two greenhouses each which are approximately 2m x 3m. We also grow soft fruit and tree fruits in other areas of the garden.

How long have you been growing veg?

I have been growing vegetables on and off for about 40 years. However, over the last six years or so I have been able to devote more time to it and it is now a real passion.

What variety of vegetable can you recommend?

I would like to recommend a variety of courgette called 'Parthenon F1'. We find this variety will set fruit without being pollinated and will continue to bear fruit in cool weather and early in the season. We grow it in the polytunnel.

Do you grow any veg in containers?

In the greenhouses I grow tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, chillies and basil in pots. Outside I grow strawberries in fish boxes and herbs in pots.

How do you grow one particular named crop from sowing to harvest?

In March I sow Brussels sprout seeds in our homemade heated propagator in the greenhouse, two seeds to a small pot. Once germinated I discard the weaker seedling and grow on, potting on into a three inch pot when required, and eventually into a five inch pot. I harden off the plants in the polytunnel and after careful preparation of the ground I plant them in the outside plot in May, ensuring the ground is firmed around each plant.

I make slugs deterrents from plastic drinks bottles or 500 - 600 ml yoghurt/soup containers with the bases cut off. I slip one of these over each plant, firming them into the soil around the base. They should be about six - eight inches tall. I find these effective in deterring slugs. As the plant grows we insert tall strong sticks into the ground around and between the plants to provide them with

support. I grow limnanthes nearby to attract hoverflies that feed on pests. As the plants mature and the lower leaves die I remove these. Picking starts in October and continues some years until March.

Why are you passionate about your plot?

Mainly because of the huge benefits that we gain. We eat well, extremely cheaply, and even in the middle of winter we have a choice of salads and vegetables to pick fresh. We know exactly where our food has come from; it has incurred no food miles, and is healthy and tasty. The pleasure that we gain on a daily basis from the delicious meals we prepare from our own produce is immeasurable.

This part of Scotland is not a traditional veg-growing area. In the past most people grew little more than potatoes and a few cabbages. The annual rainfall is high, winters are long, winds can be very strong and there are many days, even in summer, when we don't see the sun. We learned early on that many basic crops simply don't succeed outside during most summers and that if we wanted to feed ourselves reliably we needed to provide some crops with protection, hence the polytunnels.

**LAST
CHANCE
TO ENTER**

**CLOSING DATE
SEPTEMBER 25**



ENTER OUR PASSIONATE PLOTTER COMPETITION



JAYNE RADCLIFFE FROM NEAR GAINSBOROUGH, Lincs

Do you tend your plot on your own?

I tend my plot on my own, although the hard landscaping was done by my partner Kris. The whole of my plot is a veg plot and is approximately 82 x 82ft. I only work one third of it at the moment, the rest is fruit bushes and apple trees. I have been growing veg about three years.

What variety of veg can you recommend to other kitchen gardens?

I would recommend paying attention to the veg and herbs that cost the most in the shops: asparagus, mangetout, pak choi and mini corn.

Do you grow any veg in containers?

I grow in pots in the greenhouse, ie tomatoes, chillis, peppers and aubergines. I cut the bottom out of a 12in pot and half bury it in the ground of my greenhouse and then top up with compost before planting. This gives them the best start in the compost but the denser soil holds more moisture and makes for a stronger plant, easier watering too, not forgetting to feed with comfrey liquid.

How do you grow one particular named crop?

I grow mini sweetcorn 'Minipop'. I plant individually in plant pots placing them in the greenhouse to germinate. When about 6in tall I plant them out in a grid about 12in apart, filling in to 6in apart with later sowings, maximising space. The corns can be picked when the beards appear, delicious in stir fries and salads; any surplus can be frozen.

Why are you passionate about your plot?

I acquired my plot three years ago when I was recovering from cancer. I felt the need to grow and nurture thus giving me gentle exercise and fresh air with the rewards of somewhere tranquil to enjoy along with the benefits of having grown my own produce. ➤

We are looking for the UK's most passionate fruit and veggie grower and now veg plots are starting to fill up with tasty crops it is the perfect time to take some photographs and enter our competition.

If you love your plot then share it with us and other KG readers. Simply send us a few photos of your plot and you could win some great prizes and your plot will also be featured in a future issue of *Kitchen Garden*.



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VALUE
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- One Suttons Speedy Leaves crate worth £20

**TOTAL
VALUE
£974**

3RD PLACE PRIZES

- Harrod Fruit Cage worth £300
- WOLF-Garten vouchers worth £200
- Organic Gardening Catalogue voucher worth £100
- One Over the Rainbow crate worth £32
- One Salad Days crate worth £22

**TOTAL
VALUE
£654**



Are you our Passionate Plotter for 2015?

HOW TO ENTER

SEND US:

- One photograph of yourself (preferably taken on your plot. Others who help you on your plot can also be in the picture but please state who is pictured).
- Six pictures of your plot. (Aim for one overall shot and then some pictures of smaller sections of the plot or even just one crop.)
- The questionnaire (right) filled in or written separately on paper or on an email.

Pictures should be either digital jpegs (need to be fine quality e.g. set your digital camera to a minimum three megapixels before taking the pictures) or post photographs on photographic paper, not on normal printing paper (these cannot be returned).

If sending digital pictures attach them separately as jpegs to an email or put on a disc. We have difficulty using pictures that are pasted directly into a document.



Also remember to include a document containing your answers to the questionnaire. The answers can be written direct into the email if you wish.

WHAT THE JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR

A passion for growing so don't worry if your plot is not perfect or pristine but we are looking for a well-loved plot with effort to grow a good variety of crops and good use of the space.

WHERE TO SEND

EMAIL TO: erawlings@mortons.co.uk
POST TO: Kitchen Garden Passionate Plotter Competition, Mortons Media Group, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincs LN9 6JR

The closing date for the competition is September 25, 2015. Judging will commence after this date and the winners will be announced in the December issue.

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PASSIONATE PLOTTER COMPETITION 2015 ENTRY FORM

Name

Address

.....Postcode.....

Email address

Daytime tel no

Evening tel no

(Please include your name and address. We do not publish full address details)

Please answer the following questions. The more information you can give us the better, so if you prefer feel free to use a separate sheet of paper for your answers.

1 Do you tend your plot on your own, if not who helps you?

.....

.....

2 Do you have an allotment or veg plot in your garden (and approximate size)

.....

.....

3 How long have you been growing veg?

.....

.....

4 What variety of vegetable can you recommend to other kitchen gardeners?

.....

.....

5 Do you grow any veg in containers if so what and how have they been grown (compost, size of pot, feeding, how successful and will you do it again?)

.....

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6 How do you grow one particular named crop from sowing to harvest e.g. choose a crop and give us a brief summary of how you grow it from start to finish with any tips you can pass on?

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7 Why are you passionate about your plot?

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■ Please add any further details on a separate sheet if you wish.

Send the above together with your photographs to:
Kitchen Garden Passionate Plotter Competition, Mortons
Media Group, Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle,
Lincs LN9 6JR or email your pictures and answers to
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Photocopies of the above form are permitted. We
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KG BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Brussels sprouts

Christmas wouldn't be the same without sweet and nutty Brussels sprouts. Expert plotter Andrew Tokely explains how to grow them to perfection



Andrew sows his brassica crops, including sprouts, in small pots

BRUSSELS SPROUTS AT A GLANCE

	Sow	Harvest
Jan		
Feb		
Mar		
Apr		
May		
June		
Jul		
Aug		
Sept		
Oct		
Nov		
Dec		



Sprout seedlings pricked out into cell trays

Despite the fact that you can buy this vegetable almost all the year round either fresh or from the freezer, there is nothing like growing and picking your own sprouts fresh from the plot.

Traditionally, Brussels sprouts always had quite a strong taste but in recent years breeders have developed sweeter tasting varieties for supermarkets and these are now making their way into mail order catalogues for gardeners to grow and enjoy.

HOW AND WHEN TO SOW

Sprouts can be sown into a prepared seedbed in a cold frame in March or April. The soil should be raked to a fine tilth prior to sowing the seeds thinly into shallow drills 1cm (½in) deep. Once sown, lightly rake over and tamp down the surface. Germination outside in warm soil takes just seven to 10 days. Once big enough

transplant when 10-15cm (4-6in) tall.

If you prefer you can sow the seeds under glass in mid-February or March where they are better protected from pests and can get off to the best possible start (Brussels sprouts need a long growing season, especially the early harvesting types). I use 7cm (3in) square pots filled with moist seed compost, sowing and then lightly covering with fine grade vermiculite. Place the pots into a propagator set to 18-21°C (65-70°F).

As soon as the seeds have germinated (usually within five to eight days) move them out of the propagator on to the greenhouse benching; this hopefully avoids the seedlings becoming long and leggy. As soon as the seedlings are large enough to handle they are pricked out (transplanted) into individual cells in trays filled with multi-purpose compost, then grown on in the glasshouse at a minimum temperature of

SOIL PREPARATION

Brussels sprouts like to grow in rich, fertile soil. The ground should be well dug in the autumn and plenty of well-rotted manure or compost added. In the spring this is pulled down with a rake to a reasonable texture ready for planting.

Prior to planting tread the ground, so the soil is on the firm side as Brussels sprouts prefer to grow in a firm soil. This helps them produce tight button sprouts rather than loose flowery ones.

Once the soil is firmed, lightly rake the surface once more adding some Growmore fertiliser at the rate of 60gm sq m (2oz per sq yard) and raking it into the surface. The soil is now ready for planting.

TOP TIP

Brussels sprouts are best grown in firm ground to ensure they produce tight button sprouts

10°C (50°F) until large enough to move into a cold frame for hardening off.

I find this method very successful and with different sowings and different maturity dates of each variety the cropping period can be extended from late September through to February.

GROWING ON

Plants that have been grown in cell trays are transplanted into their final positions with a trowel, firming them into the soil as you go.

Plants grown in a seedbed should be watered well before lifting and then transplanted as quickly as possible to their final positions using a dibber, as these bare root plants will not have as large a rootball.

Brussels sprouts need a lot of room to grow and are best spaced 60-75cm (2-2½ft) apart ➤



Young plants shortly after planting out

in the rows and with 75-90cm (2½-3ft) between the rows. Once planted, each one is given a good watering in, making sure that it is really wet around the roots. During hot weather bare root plants may wilt for a few days until they get established and over the shock of moving. Cell raised plants usually get growing straight away.

Through the summer hoe regularly to remove weeds and if your plot is on an exposed site put a stake or cane to each stalk and tie each plant securely. This stops the plants from being blown over, or becoming loose in the soil, as this too can alter the quality of your crop. If the roots do become loose, firm them back in as soon as possible by treading firmly beside the roots.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Cabbage root fly larvae attack the roots of the plants, making them collapse. Deter them by putting a cabbage collar around the base of each plant to stop the fly from laying its eggs into the soil. You can buy mats or make your own out of 15cm (6in) squares of old carpet.

Cabbage white butterflies lay their eggs on the leaves and the caterpillars usually start eating the main head of the Brussels sprouts then move down the stalk to the buttons. Stop them by spraying with a suitable insecticide, biological control or checking plants regularly and rubbing off the eggs or picking off the caterpillars. Alternatively, grow your sprouts under crop protection netting.

Aphids (greenfly) and whitefly are common pests. Spray with an insecticide as soon as possible. Both organic and non-organic options are available.

Pigeons and doves will eat the leaves so consider growing under

TOP TIP

In windy areas tie stalks to a stout cane to stop them blowing over or loosening in the soil to ensure the buttons remain firm and not flowery.

net covers for protection. Pigeons can also be a nuisance once the plants are mature, especially in cold weather, as they will sit and eat the tops of the sprouts and soil the buttons below. When plants are mature and the buttons are ready to eat, remove the sprout tops; this stops them feeding and the stalks of buttons remain clean for harvesting as required.

Club root is the main disease that affects Brussels sprouts. If this is found in an area of your plot you should try not to grow any of the brassica family on it for at least seven to 10 years. New breeding has recently brought some club root resistant varieties to the home gardener. Growing in the cell trays and planting out is also a good deterrent, as the plants get away quickly without any check to their growth, which could allow this disease to attack.

HARVESTING

Keep plants clean as they grow, removing any yellowing leaves from the lower part of the stems to help give the sprouts more air circulation and hopefully deter any pests and diseases. Start to pick when the sprouts are tight buttons about the same size as a walnut. To get the longest cropping period from the plants always start picking from the base of the stalks and work your way up. ■

ANDREW'S PICK OF VARIETIES



■ **'TRAFALGAR F1'** – I love the sweet flavour of these sprouts. Ready to harvest from October through to the new year. Widely available.



■ **'BRODIE F1'** – Regularly top in flavour taste tests. Buttons hold well with a mild sweet, non-bitter peppery taste. (Kings, D T Brown)



■ **'CRISPUS F1'** – Early maturing and club root resistant. Tasty, tight buttons hold well on strong stalks. Widely available.



■ **'MAXIMUS F1'** – Good flavour and a great replacement for 'Peer Gynt'. Widely available.



■ **'RED BULL'** – A red variety with a nutty flavour. (T&M, Marshalls, Plants of Distinction)



■ **'FILLBASKET'** – An old variety loved by those who want traditional flavours. Widely available.



■ **'PETIT POSY'** – An open flowery sprout. Ideal for stir frying. Widely available.

FULL
DETAILS
OF SEED
SUPPLIERS
PAGE 97



Protect your crop from birds and butterflies with netting.

NOVEL WAYS WITH SPROUTS

- Mix with pecan nuts and/or bacon
- Try them with fruit such as raisins
- Roast them with fish such as salmon
- Dress lightly-steamed or boiled sprouts with butter and lemon juice
- Serve in a Gruyere cheese sauce
- Add chopped chestnuts to mashed and lightly seasoned sprouts and add a little nutmeg
- Chop before stir-frying with pancetta and sage



NEXT MONTH:
A beginner's guide to winter cabbage

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Garlic AT A GLANCE

Garlic has become a valued ingredient for so many dishes these days that no respectable kitchen should really be without it

Plant:
March-
April/October-
November
Harvest:
May-August

A member of the allium family of onions and shallots, though sometimes referred to as a herb, garlic is not difficult to grow and quite easy to maintain. It can be grown directly into the ground or in containers, so is quite a versatile plant which can be accommodated in whatever space you have available.

PLANTING

Garlic for planting is bought as a bulb, usually two or three to a pack. The bulbs need to be split into cloves first and planted with the flat bottom part of the clove downwards. Garlic likes a fertile, well-drained soil, so apply plenty of well-rotted manure and organic matter in autumn for spring planting, and in early summer for autumn planting. If you have recently harvested a crop on the same patch which was well manured, garlic could be used as a follow on. If your soil is acidic,

add lime to increase the alkalinity of the soil (up to about 6.5 pH).

Cloves should be planted 5cm (2in) deep, 7.5cm-10cm (3in-4in) apart and 20cm (8in) between rows. Alternatively, you can grow them in 40cm (16in) pots. Some growers prefer to start their garlic cloves off in modular cells to get them off to a good start and then plant them out a few weeks later or even overwinter them for planting out in spring.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR PLANTS

Garlic requires very little maintenance other than watering if the weather turns dry and regular weeding. Even though cold is good where garlic is concerned, if the weather turns very cold, say below -5°C (23°F), a little mulching around the plants will help protect them, or cover with fleece or a cloche until the weather warms up a little.



Garlic is purchased as bulbs and split into cloves



Plant cloves 5cm (2in) deep in fertile soil



Hoe regularly to remove weeds

RECIPE IDEAS

FINGERLING POTATOES WITH GARLIC AND SAGE

Cut potatoes longways and place in an ovenproof dish, add olive oil, garlic and sage. Cook at 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7 until potatoes are roasted (use rosemary or thyme in addition to or instead of sage if preferred).



WATCH OUT FOR

Garlic tends to be relatively problem free but can experience the same problems that also affect other members of the onion family.

■ **ALLIUM LEAF MINER:** This is a relative newcomer, first appearing in the early years of the 21st century in the southern half of the UK, but spreading fast. The fly lays eggs on the plant and the maggots burrow into all parts of the plant. The resulting pupae are brown. Covering with fleece or fine insect netting will keep the flies out.

■ **LEEK MOTH:** The caterpillars of this moth feed on the leaves, causing serious damage to the plant and consequent rotting. Covering with fleece or fine insect netting will keep the moths out. Clear the debris away from around the plant too as adult moths are likely to overwinter there.

■ **ONION WHITE ROT:** This can devastate a crop and is more likely in hot, dry summers with the leaves turning yellow and the base of the bulbs showing fluffy white fungus. Nothing much to be done here other than avoiding growing any of the onion family on the same patch for five years or more as this is a soil-borne disease.

■ **RUST:** This is an unsightly fungal disease which shows itself as orange-red-brown pustules on leaves (below). Unless seriously affected, the bulbs themselves tend to be unaffected.



VARIETIES TO TRY

Hardneck types produce large cloves that don't store as well as softneck types which produce more cloves too. Hardneck varieties often produce scapes (flower stalks) which should be cut off – though they are edible and can be used to flavour savoury dishes. Elephant garlic, which belongs to the leek family and is therefore not a true garlic, produces mild-flavoured, very large, whole bulbs which don't divide into cloves.

■ **'ELEPHANT GARLIC':** This aptly named variety of the leek family produces whole bulbs that dwarf garlic bulbs. Suitable for both spring and autumn planting.

■ **'GERMIDOUR':** A purple-streaked softneck variety with a mild flavour. Suitable for spring and autumn planting.

■ **'PROVENCE WIGHT':** This softneck variety produces large bulbs. Suitable for autumn planting.

■ **'RED DUKE':** A hardneck variety which produces purple-tinged bulbs with a strong flavour. Good for autumn planting.

HARVESTING

Garlic is ready for lifting when the leaves begin to turn yellow and start to bend over. Leave the bulbs in too long and the cloves will start to split, though if you lift them too early they will have had insufficient time in the ground to dry out and will not store so well, so monitor closely come harvest time.

Use a fork to loosen the soil around the roots before lifting and then spread the bulbs out on trays to dry for a few days, or under cover if it's wet. If you keep the stalks on you can plait or string them and then hang them up to dry in a cool, frost-free shed. ■

TOP TIP

Water at the base of the plant rather than from above to lessen the likelihood of fungal diseases



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**TRIED
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Seed tapes

Seed tapes are designed to help make sowing quick and easy. Joe Maiden puts a range to the test to see if they do just that

TOP TIP

Tapes can simply be torn to the required length if you do not wish to sow a whole row at once

Seed tapes have been around for a little while, but the range has increased in recent years. They consist of seeds which are sandwiched between two layers of biodegradable paper and spaced at the perfect distance for sowing. All the gardener has to do is to make a drill in the normal way, but wide enough to take the paper tape, run the tape along the bottom of the drill, cover with soil and keep moist.

At the beginning of the growing season I was sent a range of seed tapes to try. Among these were spring and winter collections of vegetable seed tapes.

The spring collection included a 2m (6ft 6in) tape each of:

- Beetroot 'Boltardy'. Top selling variety.
- Carrot 'Early Nantes 2'. Harvest from small finger size.
- Spring onion 'White Lisbon'. Popular for salads.
- Leaf salad 'Spicy Mix'. Nutritious mixed leaves.
- Spinach beet 'Bright Lights'. Can be treated as cut-and-come-again salad leaf or allowed to mature.
- Radish 'French Breakfast 3'. Crisp, tasty succulent roots.
- Lettuce 'Lollo Rossa'. Tasty Italian type.
- Turnip 'Purple Top Milan'. Delicious crunchy texture.
- Rocket. Adds a peppery tang to salads.
- Spinach 'Gigante D'inverno'. Vigorous, good leaf production.

The instructions advised to sow February/March and that I would be harvesting within eight to 11 weeks, but should give a spread depending on the type from April to July. For a continuous supply, you are advised to sow at two-weekly intervals. In the end sowing took place at the end of April since up until then the conditions had not been ideal; at times too wet, at other times frosty with cold winds.





The winter collection contained:

- Leek 'Neptune'. Not grown this one before.
- Leek 'Musselburgh'. Very winter hardy.
- Parsnip 'Tender & True'. Always reliable.
- Kale 'Dwarf Green Curled'. My favourite kale.
- Kale 'Nero di Toscana'. A must-grow vegetable.
- Turnip 'Atlantic'. Wonderful at golf ball size.
- Cauliflower 'All The Year Round'. This variety stood the test of time!
- Swede 'Best of All'. A good performer.
- Cabbage 'Red Drum Head'. Described as good for pickling.
- Savoy cabbage 'Tourmaline'. One that has performed well for me in past trials when sown in trays and transplanted out later.

In this case, instructions were to sow in May and June for harvesting from September to February the following year. This I did.

This is a very interesting selection of tapes as normally I would grow the leeks, cauliflower and cabbage by sowing indoors and transplanting into modules prior to planting. I have good past experience with all the varieties except leek 'Neptune' which I had not grown before. I have also realised that lots of this selection like lime so during my ground preparation I took this into consideration.

It is really important to get the ground prep spot on when direct sowing, whether with tapes or loose seeds. This is because most of the winter selection will be in the ground longer as we are sowing direct rather than in trays. I wonder how much time this will save me rather than sowing indoors, transplanting and watering?



A wide range of tapes for individual vegetables is also available and I chose a packet each of parsnip, leek and beetroot tapes to grow alongside the collections. These veg can take hours to thin out, so I hoped these tapes would save me a lot of time.

PREPARATION FOR SOWING

For the spring collection I chose the land where I had grown my onion crop and this had been lifted in late August the previous year. This area was manured well, and after lifting the onions the soil was dug and left rough for the winter weather to break it down. To get it in excellent condition, I firmed the soil in late February with my feet to break down the lumps and then got the rake working to give me a fine tilth.

The land for the winter collection was dug over in November and some four-year-old, well-rotted farmyard manure was incorporated at the same time. The land was left rough-dug with unbroken clods, and once the winter weather had broken the clods down, a dressing of garden lime at the rate of 56g per sq m (2oz per sq yd) was applied in February. Weeds were controlled by hoeing frequently on warm sunny days and raking well to get a good fine tilth.

This piece of ground had grown my maincrop potatoes and sweetcorn.

The parsnip, leek and beetroot tapes from the individual packets were sown on May 1 when my soil was warming up well; I could tell this because of the germinating weed seedlings which I controlled with regular hoeing.

WHY SEED TAPES?

Tapes can seem relatively expensive when compared to packets of traditional seeds (the collections of 10 veg cost £9.99 and individual packets £2.99 each), so what are the advantages? During my lifetime of growing vegetables, I have grown all the varieties mentioned, lots of them appearing in my writings for KG. Many are well known garden varieties which have stood the test of time, so I know what to expect. However, with most of the types mentioned using normal sowing methods, you often get erratic germination because it isn't always easy to sow small seeds thinly and evenly. So with the spacing of the seeds taken care of, one garden chore can be avoided and that, of course, is thinning out. The packets promise that gardeners will be able to sow seeds in seconds, with the perfect spacing every time.

When thinning out, damage can be caused to adjacent seedlings due to loosening of the roots. Lots of people blame this for causing carrots to fork. There can be other advantages too. For example, again in the case of carrots, because little or no thinning should be required, the chances of attracting carrot fly are reduced (carrot fly is attracted to the crop from miles around by the smell of the damaged seedlings as they are removed.)

USING THE TAPES

Sowing using the tapes was one of the easiest tasks I have ever undertaken. It was just a matter of timing the day so that the conditions were just right – setting the garden line, taking out a shallow drill, watering the base of the drills prior to sowing to make sure the moisture content was high and then laying the tapes carefully in the bottom, using the moisture to hold them in place. I also made sure that the drills were marked with canes.

At this stage I marked each variety in my diary to remind me what was growing next to each other; diaries and simple notepads are essential for gardeners. ➤



STEP BY STEP SOWING SEED TAPES



STEP 1. Having cultivated the soil and removed weeds, make a drill with the edge of a hoe or a stick



STEP 2. Water the drill thoroughly prior to sowing to ensure there is sufficient moisture



STEP 3. Place the tape in the drill, tearing off any excess so that there is no overlap at either end



STEP 4. Push lightly on the tape to ensure 'adhesion' with the wet soil beneath



STEP 5. Cover with soil to the required depth, water well and mark the drills with canes



Tapes sown in a tray show the density of some varieties in the spring collection

TOP TIP

Run some water down the drill prior to placing the tape into it as well as watering after covering. Continue to keep the soil moist (not wet) as this helps seedlings to emerge

TAKING NOTES - AN ANECDOTE

After my dad passed away, I was looking through his seed tins and noticed a packet containing onion seeds. On it was written: 'Large one crossed with Wally Woodhead's and Joe's – Large Pointed'. Wally was my dad's pal and, like him, a keen exhibitor. I decided to try and germinate some of the seeds, the only problem being that the seed was six years old. Nevertheless I managed to germinate and grow on 30 plants and now, along with selections made by top exhibitors like Vincent Throupe and David Metcalf, dad's selection is an excellent show onion that has won many prizes for me. So dad's seed packet taught me to make sure I keep notes; top show men like Vincent and Dave always note down all the different shapes, weights, etc. of their show produce to help them improve next year.



Although the tapes saved time in thinning (above) against hand sown rows (top row), the low density of seedlings means gaps are more likely should problems occur

CONCLUSIONS

Having tried a number of crops from seed tapes I can say that I do think they are a good idea. The seeds were correctly spaced in the tapes, yet it is relatively easy to plug a gap with another little section of tape or to use them to grow a few plants in containers.

There were some drawbacks; pests such as flea beetles on the brassicas were highlighted by thinner sowing – since there are no spare seedlings, all need to be healthy and intact. Slugs, too, can easily cause large gaps.

Also I found that when using the tapes I needed to hit the weather just right.

On one windy day I struggled to keep the tape in place – and if it is very hot the tapes need extra water to ensure that the paper breaks down, so allowing the seedlings to emerge freely.

I recommend covering with fleece to reduce evaporation of water from the soil and potential pest problems.

A few weeds managed to push through the tapes at germination time to confuse things a little, but for me the great advantages of the tapes were the ease with which you can gauge the amount sown, the lack of waste through over sowing and of course...there is no thinning. ■

SUPPLIERS

My Groweasy Seed Tapes were kindly supplied by Suttons Seeds (0844 992 0606) but most of the larger seed companies offer a good range of both vegetable and flower seed tapes. Full details of all the major seed suppliers can be found on page 97.

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A CORDIAL SUMMER

TV wine expert Olly Smith makes use of his garden produce and the local Sussex countryside to flavour his summer tipples



Olly has started growing peaches

Wine expert Olly Smith has become quite the jet-setter, recently whizzing over to Australia to sample their exquisite wines for ITV's *This Morning*. "Hot air ballooning over the Yarra Valley was the most amazing experience, drifting across skies of purple just looking down at land strewn with incredible wildlife and kangaroos; vineyard workers probably wondering what the hell this balloon was doing above them," he grins. But while filming down under was a thrill, Olly is happily settled in the Sussex countryside. For this family man, home and garden are one and the same – and he's been tending to his for about 20 years.

APPLE MINT AND ROSEMARY

"The first original plant I looked after was some apple mint in a pot that my grandmother gave me when I was a student in Scotland. I quickly discovered that I liked growing things that I could either taste, like herbs, or eat, like fruit," recounts Olly. It was from that student house that he started what would become a lifelong tradition, taking treasured cuttings from one garden to the next. "It started with the mint plant, which I've taken from every garden I've ever made, and the other things I take are bulbs like daffodils and snowdrops. I always try to take a clump and try and regenerate them in the next place. It's lovely to have that sense of continuity."

"The garden is the home for me"

Thanks to this dedication, Olly's current garden is full of memories of plots past, while also serving to complement his professional palate. The wine expert is drawn to plants that will flavour his beverages, be they spritzers, cocktails or wines. "Herbs are actually really interesting to make cordials out of. You've obviously got nice flavours in fresh mint but things like rosemary can be very interesting to make into a cordial and add to a gin and tonic. You can also make a rosemary cordial to layer into a cocktail with gin and it gives a really aromatic, piney but refreshing character to it. I've just made rhubarb cordial because that's in season in my garden at the moment. The children have it just diluted but I have it in Prosecco.

It turns the Prosecco pink and gives it a little rhubarby kick and it's completely scrumptious."



Refreshing rhubarb cordial



Apple mint

SOFT FRUITS

"Soft fruits are fantastic. I'm very lucky because where I am I've got lots of plums and I've even started growing peaches. These things can be fantastic to make cordials with. I'd recommend experimenting with herbs, they can be incredibly rewarding."

Olly harvests his own fruits for summer wines, and anticipates the sweeter fare making a well-deserved comeback. "I think all of these things that are around growing and can be made into delicious elixirs, absolutely, long live all of those things. All the hedgerow wines, all the old skills of the countryside," he says.

You don't need a bountiful garden to reap the benefits of English produce. Like many, Olly is an intrepid forager, and knows where to head to find the ingredients for refreshing tipples.

"Anywhere by the side of things – by which I mean to the side of roads or to the edge of a field," he says. "It's always in the margins, like on the beach, where you find the most interesting things. So it might be where a field turns into a path or where the road turns slowly into the sand via a bit of grass on the beach. ➤"

Olly does a lot of foraging for dandelions, a great delicacy in the Mediterranean



Herbs are something Olly likes to use in his cordials

DANDELION LEAVES

"You'll find interesting things like samphire on the beach this time of year, things coming up and down in the hedgerows and the forests. At the moment it's a world of flowers, but there's lots of nettles too and wild garlic, which is fantastic to either chop straight into salads or add into soups. I do a lot of foraging for dandelion leaves; it's a great delicacy in the Mediterranean and the east and towards Greece. All you do is steam it and add a load of olive oil, salt, maybe pepper and some lemon and it's completely yummy and totally free! Treat it a bit like spinach and just wilt it down. It can be a bit bitter so needs some cooking but it's easy to get it right. It helps when the leaves are young and tender."

A man who takes such obvious delight in the wild, Olly's garden was never going to be a heavily maintained and groomed affair. "My wife Sophie is very keen on weeding – I'm not," he says with a smile. "I like leaving patches of my garden that are just wild. I think it's great for the eco system; it's fantastic to see what might crop up as well." Olly has already had some successes from

this ad-hoc approach. "It's nice every year to see new strange flowers that are out of our control. It's also encouraged things that I didn't expect in my garden. For example in my wild garden outside my office some ducks have just taken up residence – I think because it's so high it gives them cover and they feel safe there but that's a really welcome find. I've noticed they've been going round the garden eating my snails and slugs which is terribly helpful!"

JOY IN GROWING

The enthusiastic wine connoisseur finds joy in growing – and if his labour can be transformed into a refreshing beverage, so much the better. "I live right next to a field that on the Ordnance Survey is called Hop Garden and obviously once it was a garden of hops," he says. "Obviously, we still grow hops here and you can see all the old oast houses but we don't grow half as many hops as we used to. With the resurgence of craft beer I'd love to see more local varieties of hops growing across Sussex; I think that'd be completely glorious to see." The Harveys beer distillery in Olly's nearby village of Lewes in Sussex has already produced namesake bottles of Jolly Olly, but if Olly has his way, we envision the next batch will be harvested even closer to home. ■



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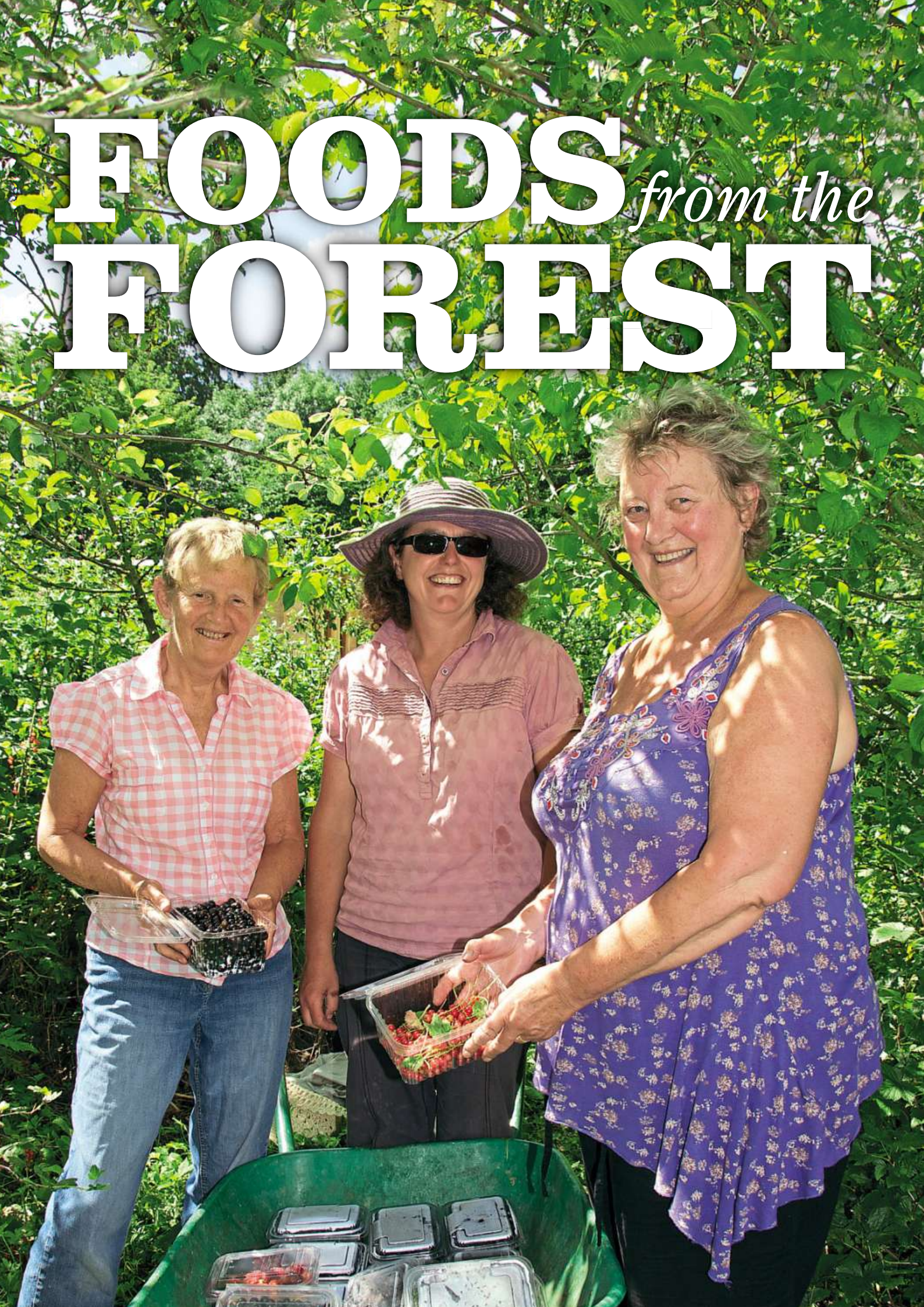
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FOODS *from the* FOREST

The forest garden at Old Sleningford is the engine for a preserves business, a haven for wildlife and a model for self-reliance. Marie-Claire Kidd reports from a smallholding making the most of marginal land.

Just a few miles outside Ripon there is a hidden gem of a garden. It produces tonnes of fruit each year, is home to hundreds of trees and countless birds and insects, and – here's the joy – requires minimal maintenance.

This gem is the forest garden at Old Sleningford Farm, the oldest and best-established of its kind in Yorkshire. Set over two acres, it forms part of a 17-acre smallholding run by Rachel Benson and her partner Martin Baker, on marginal land rented from Tom Ramsden's Old Sleningford estate at North Stainley.

MULTI-STOREY GARDEN

The forest garden mimics immature woodland in which all plants are edible or useful. Food crops occupy every available space, including under the ground, on the ground and as bushes, trees and climbers.

Rachel and Martin started planting theirs 10 years ago, aided by their friends Keith Mott, Lindsay Cook and a small army of volunteers. They have expanded it section by section to include more than 250 fruit and nut trees which shelter a multi-storey garden beneath their canopy.

Planting a forest garden begins with a 'canopy layer' of mature fruit trees, interplanted with a lower layer of smaller nut and fruit trees on dwarf root stocks. At Old Sleningford this includes dozens of varieties of apples and pears, along with cherries, plums, cobnuts and hazels. There are peaches and apricots too, although the previous two damp winters have caused peach leaf curl and early frosts have prevented them from fruiting for the past three years. Nevertheless, they are growing and they may fruit as North Yorkshire's climate changes. Increasingly, the garden also includes self-seeded native trees like hawthorn and ash. These are removed as seedlings, or allowed to grow in a controlled way to provide wood for burning and green woodworking.

Below the canopy layer are the fruit bushes, including black, red and white currants, gooseberries, raspberries and unusual additions such as the Japanese wineberry, which produces a tart fruit that looks like a red blackberry.

VIGOROUS VARIETIES

Next is a 'herbaceous layer' of perennial vegetables and herbs. These include marjoram, oregano, chamomile, thyme, tarragon, fennel, lemon balm and mint. Below the herbs, ground cover comes from self-seeding edible plants like spinach and chard, cultivated and wild strawberries and lots of salad leaves. Rachel favours vigorous varieties like salad burnet, rocket, the sorrels and Good King Henry. The underground layer, grown for its roots and tubers, includes Jerusalem artichokes and onions. Finally, vines and climbers like grapes, hops and kiwi fruit maximise productivity by occupying a seventh 'vertical' layer.

"We decided to plant a forest garden because the idea of lots of food with minimal work appealed," Rachel explains. "We knew that setting it up would take time, effort and money, but once it was established we were hopeful it would require little intervention. The forest garden isn't just for us for food," she adds. "It's also for the wildlife. We don't need all that it produces." ➤



Fruit bushes grow below the canopy level



ABOVE: Japanese wineberries thrive in the understorey below the trees.



LEFT: Like all the produce in the garden, the hazel nuts are shared by the gardeners with the local wildlife

RIGHT: Tree fruit such as apples form the upper layer of the forest garden

WEED CONTROL

The most common pests here are mice, which stripped the strawberries of their fruit this year. Nonetheless, Rachel would rather be with them than without them. There is no pest control beyond a rabbit and deer-proof fence around the forest garden.

Because all the plants are perennials or self-seed easily, the ground is permanently covered, which in theory means minimal weeding. In practice, there is always weeding to do.

"The biggest investment is time," Rachel says. "Being a gardener I knew we'd have to do something or it would just revert to nature."

Weeds are removed in order to get to trees and bushes for harvesting, or when they threaten to smother useful plants. "We chop and drop," Rachel explains. "We have a lot of nettles, which are chopped and left beneath the bushes, creating a mulch and also feeding the bushes. We don't take it away, we use it to build the fertility."

But Rachel and her volunteers spend more time harvesting than on maintenance. "I spend a day a week in there, and about five of the 12 volunteer workdays we do every year are in the forest garden. Three volunteer workdays per year are dedicated entirely to picking fruit; strawberries and raspberries in July, blackcurrants in August and apples in October."

Last year Rachel stopped counting after weighing 110kg of blackcurrants. In previous summers the garden has produced a quarter of a tonne of strawberries.

PROLIFIC HARVEST

Up to four Willing Workers on Organic Farms, or WWOOFers, arrive for a week each month from April to October. "During WWOOF weeks we spend about three of the seven days mainly doing bigger jobs and harvesting," Rachel says.

The garden became productive very quickly. "Even during the first year, we were harvesting soft fruit and leaves. By the end of the second year the first section was covered with plants and produced a good harvest of berries, herbs and salads. During year four, section one provided a hefty harvest, including the first apples and pears."

Because the forest garden was planted in sections, visitors are able to observe how it has matured and how its productivity changes. In the immature forest garden, the lower layers are at their most productive. Later, as the trees and shrubs mature, they provide the bulk of the crops. ➤



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By 2010 yields were sufficient for Rachel to start a new venture, Old Sleningford Preserves, and still have enough to share with volunteers. "I started the preserves business because we physically couldn't eat everything and I hate to see food go to waste," she says. "I do a CSA, community supported agriculture. I have about 20 customers within a 10-mile radius who pay £7 per month for something sweet, something savoury and a drink. Martin and I deliver on a tandem and trailer."

FOOD FAIRS

She also attends a few local fairs each year, including Ripon Cathedral's massive Christmas Gift and Food Fair, and she sells preserves and drinks to visitors and people who attend courses at Old Sleningford.

As forest gardens gain popularity, many are looking for inspiration. "Lots of people are doing it on allotments and in gardens," Rachel says. "People have cottoned on to the idea that if you're planting trees why not plant edible trees? And rather than just grass under the trees, why not fill the space with other food crops?"

Visitors enjoy the thrill of finding perfectly ripe fruit in the dappled shade of the wood and the peace of a garden created not just for people, but for trees and wildlife. Regular volunteer Jan Deighton calls it "a little bit of paradise". "I love being down here," she says. "We meet interesting people. It's companionship. It's supporting a different way of life. It's lovely to find something a bit different, living a life that's more in touch with the planet. To be part of that is fantastic."

Janet Willoner, another regular volunteer, was so impressed on her first visit that she went home and dug up her lawn. "This is just a perfect way of going on," she says. "Sharing is really, really important and Rachel and Martin do it fantastically down here."



ABOVE: Currants, such as these jewel-like redcurrants, thrive under the trees

LEFT: Jan Deighton, a regular volunteer, helping out with harvesting

RIGHT: Raspberries love the conditions that the forest garden provides



LIFESTYLE CHOICE

For Rachel, forest gardening is a lifestyle choice. "I do this as a hobby," she says. "Selling preserves and holding courses help the garden pay for itself. There's potential to make it more profitable by expanding these, or having a pick-your-own or box scheme. That would then become a 'job', something I'm not interested in. It's the food it gives us, the wildlife and ambience that's important."

"When we started, we wanted people to share and learn from what we are doing and we aimed to demonstrate and inspire self-reliance. Ten years on and hundreds of visitors later, the most common feedback is that people go away feeling inspired and motivated to put into practice some of the ideas we have given them. And that inspires and motivates me to keep going too."

Old Sleningford runs a series of edible forest gardening courses throughout the year. It welcomes groups for pre-arranged visits and individuals to workdays and Willing Workers on Organic Farms weeks. For details see www.oldsleningford.co.uk. ■

Janet Willoner,
another regular
volunteer



"We
wanted
people to
share and
learn"

RACHEL'S TOP FOREST GARDENING TIPS:

- You can plant a forest garden on a plot of any size
- Plant the canopy first, then interplant the trees with smaller trees, bushes, herbs and ground cover as plants become available
- Mulch well and keep on top of weeding as you establish your forest garden, it will save time later
- Use green manures such as mustard and alfalfa around your trees to keep the ground covered and stop mulch and leaves from blowing away
- 'Chop and drop' weeds to build up soil fertility
- Cultivate bee-friendly flowers and if possible establish a beehive to help ensure fruit crops are pollinated
- Do not plant tall trees or allow them to establish naturally, they will outcompete the fruit trees
- Plant different varieties of each crop in order to elongate the harvest, for example Old Sleningford grows six kinds of gooseberry, which fruit at different times
- Do not use pesticides, the forest garden is for wildlife too



Iceberg lettuce on trial

Colin Randel, a member of the Royal Horticultural Society Vegetable Trials Forum and an expert vegetable grower, reports on the 2014 iceberg lettuce trials held at RHS Wisley in Surrey

Iceberg lettuce has long been popular with those who want a crunchy lettuce heart to slice up for their salads and one that remains fresh when wrapped in cling film and stored in the refrigerator.

The choices of iceberg cultivars have not changed greatly over the years; the latest trials included some of the same varieties which were put through their paces as long ago as 1993 ('Lakeland'), 2001 ('Challenge' and 'Robinson') and 2003 ('Sioux' in the 'coloured' lettuce trial). These four cultivars were included among just 22 in the 2014 assessments but only 'Challenge' and 'Robinson' had their Award of Garden Merit (AGM) reconfirmed.

For many gardeners the start to the 2014 season was a nightmare, with incessant rain and flooding, but then we had a very welcome and virtually continuous hot summer and autumn.

SOWING AND PLANTING

The seeds for the trial were raised in cell trays and sown on April 28 under glass. After hardening off for a few days, they were planted out on May 30, 30cm (12in) each way. Many gardeners, of course, sow directly outside instead and then thin out.

AGM CRITERIA

In the trials, the lettuce was judged according to the following criteria – plant quality and uniformity, head shape, size and density, absence of bolting, standing ability and holding quality, disease resistance and taste.

The initial assessments were conducted on July 9 and 21, but not all of the cultivars were fully hearted. 'Excalibur', 'Argentinas' and 'Hollywood' were recommended an AGM.



TOP TIP

If you prefer to direct sow outdoors and find yourself sowing during warm weather in July and August, place the seeds in the fridge the day before sowing. Cooled seed breaks dormancy quickly in warmer soil for a more even germination



The judging took place in July





THE AWARD WINNERS



■ 'EXCALIBUR'

Nicely shaped, smooth heads with well-formed internal structure, quite compact plant habit and holding well in condition. Good uniformity. Not yet available to gardeners.



■ 'ARGENTINAS'

Medium-sized plants with nicely formed hearts of good uniformity. Showed good resistance to mildew, nasonovia (lettuce leaf aphid) and root aphid. Not yet available to gardeners.



■ 'HOLLYWOOD'

More compact plant habit so ideal for the smaller garden. Smooth, round heads of good colour and good internal structure. Holds its condition well on the plot. Available from Thompson & Morgan. ►

Picture: Thompson & Morgan

DOWNY MILDEW (*BREMIA LACTUCAE*)

Mildew is a serious problem on lettuce, but thankfully was not evident on this early trial, being much more prevalent during the later summer and autumn crops. However, lettuce varieties possess a number of specific factors that confer resistance to various races of downy mildew. Unfortunately, the mildew is constantly striving to beat these resistances. If your crops have suffered from this disease it is worth noting that larger framed and heavier hearted cultivars can often escape mildew damage. This is because only the outer leaves take the brunt of the damage and are easily removed when harvesting or prior to preparation in the kitchen.

As most gardeners do not spray their lettuce with fungicides then, apart from early sowings, our main weapon for combatting mildew is to choose a variety with good mildew resistance as stated in the seed catalogues.

Two interesting cultivars included in this trial were 'Elyburg' (a gem cos/iceberg cross) and 'Sweet Success' (a romaine cos/iceberg cross). Both were entered and offered by Thompson & Morgan. Both show the attributes of their parentage, having the sweetness and crunch of an iceberg but neither looked like an iceberg, so they were classed "not to schedule" and removed from the trial. Interestingly, neither showed tipburn, a disorder caused by a lack of calcium in the leaf (exacerbated by dry weather) yet this was noticeable on several other cultivars. ■



Tipburn was evident on several iceberg cultivars (top left)

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Pears AT A GLANCE

A pear tree in the garden is a joy to behold. This sweet and succulent fruit is a joy to eat too, and you don't need to have a big garden to grow them. So here's how to go about it

Plant:
November-
March
Harvest:
August-
November



VARIETIES TO TRY

■ **'CONCORDE'**: Combines the best of 'Conference' and 'Comice' so a good cropper and a very flavoursome variety.

■ **'CONFERENCE'**: A popular and well-regarded variety. Is self-fertile but results can be variable so best to plant alongside another variety for cross pollination.

■ **'DOYENNÉ DU COMICE'**: A very flavoursome variety but does better in a warm, sheltered spot.

■ **'WILLIAMS' BON CHRETIEN'**: Quite a hardy variety producing good quality fruit. Crops reliably.

Pear trees can be bought bare rooted in which case they should be planted November to March, or buy a containerised tree which can be planted all year round. As most varieties are not self-fertile, you should buy at least two different varieties that flower around the same time so that cross pollination can take place.

Pear trees like a soil that is fertile, free draining and moist. Choose a sunny but sheltered spot – against or near a south-facing wall, for example. Before planting dig a hole, add well-rotted manure and then drive a stake into the centre of the hole. With bare-rooted trees plant as deep as the previous soil line but make it wide enough to accommodate the roots when they are spread out. Once planted, tie the trunk of the tree to the stake. With container trees plant as deep as it was in the pot. Container-grown trees need a 45-50cm (18-20in) pot and to be placed where frost is less likely to catch them.

SPACING AND TRAINING

Pear trees can be grown in a number of ways: fan, bush, espalier, dwarf bush, spindle bush, dwarf pyramid and cordon. Spacing is important for pollination so there are minimum distances according to which type of tree you are growing. Choose a rootstock that will produce a tree suitable for the size of your garden. Bush trees need a distance of 4.5m (15ft) whereas cordons only need 75cm (2½ft). It is important to choose the right rootstock for what you intend to grow, and Quince A or Quince C are the most popular. For growing in pots, choose Quince C which is a dwarfing rootstock. If training your pear tree as a cordon, fan or espalier against a wall or fence you will need to install some wires set 45cm (18in) apart to secure the branches to.

AFTERCARE

In spring both soil-grown and container-grown pear trees will benefit from mulching around the



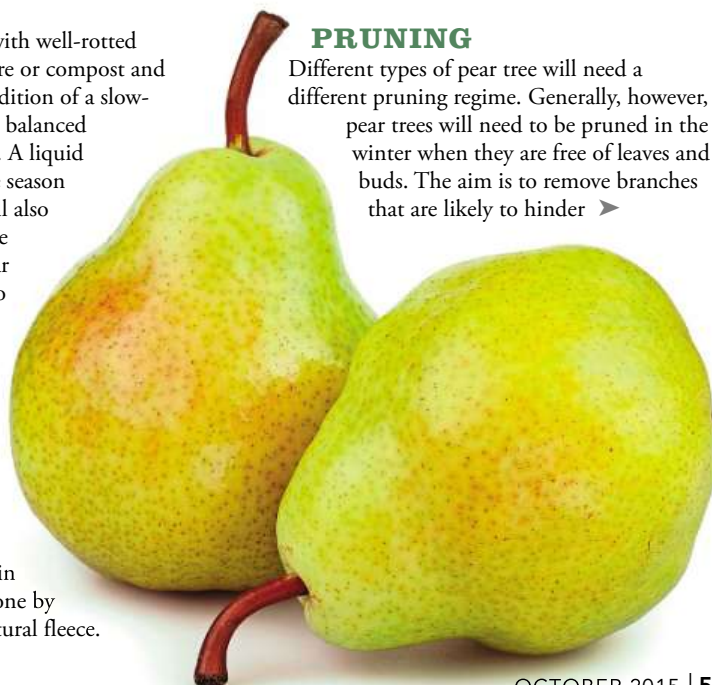
TOP TIP

If you are growing your pear tree in a container make sure you water and feed regularly. A high potash tomato feed is ideal

base with well-rotted manure or compost and the addition of a slow-release, balanced fertiliser. A liquid feed as the season progresses will also be beneficial. Make sure you keep your pear trees watered – more so in dry spells – though established trees are more self-sufficient. This is even more crucial for container-grown trees as these can dry out fairly quickly. Pear tree flowers will need protecting from frosts in spring which can be done by covering with horticultural fleece.

PRUNING

Different types of pear tree will need a different pruning regime. Generally, however, pear trees will need to be pruned in the winter when they are free of leaves and buds. The aim is to remove branches that are likely to hinder ➤



RECIPE IDEAS

■ **CHOCOLATE PEAR:** Melt 100g chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of boiling water. Clean the pear, pour chocolate over and leave to cool, then put in the fridge.

Alternatively, cut the pear into slices and then pour chocolate over.

■ **BAKED PEARS:** Cut large pears in half and take out the core. Add cranberries, 4 tsp of honey, sprinkle with cinnamon and crushed walnuts. Bake at 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 for 30 minutes.



WATCH OUT FOR

■ **BROWN ROT:** This fungal disease causes pears to turn brown with concentric circles of yellowish mould. Nothing can be done with this other than to remove the rotting fruit and dispose of it.

■ **CODLING MOTH:** The eggs are laid on emerging fruit and the resultant larvae burrow into it. Codling moth traps are freely available, and a winter tree wash will help destroy overwintering pests.

■ **PEAR MIDGE:** The orange-white larvae of this fly burrow into fruitlets, causing them to turn black and eventually drop off. Pear midges devastate a crop. Best to be vigilant and remove any infected fruit so that the fully grown larvae don't fall to the ground below to pupate.

■ **PEAR SCAB:** This is a fungal disease causing dark brown blotches to appear on the fruit as it develops. This disease leads to the skins of the fruit cracking and is more likely in wet seasons. Discard affected fruit.

the health and productivity of the tree so this will include any that are diseased or dead, or those that are crossing each other. Espaliers, cordons and dwarf pyramids will need summer pruning too. Maturing trees develop fruiting spurs which may need to be thinned out during the winter months.

HARVESTING

With pear trees you may need to be patient and a lot will depend on growing conditions. The tree will usually start to bear fruit in years four to six. Pick the pears when they are expected to be ready, according to the variety. Look for a change in colour, and enlarged fruit which will still be firm to the touch. Store somewhere cool and dark, discarding any bruised fruit. Pears will ripen in their own time – weeks or months – depending on the variety. They will be softer round the stalk when they are nearing ripeness. ■



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Time to harvest & store

Charles Dowding gives his top tips on storing some of his favourite crops

Suddenly the weather changes, daylight becomes scarce and a lingering summer is over. The plot can be full of winter food now and while some can be left for later harvests, a few vegetables are best picked soon for eating and storing.

ROOT VEG AND FROST

Root vegetables resist frost according to their quantity of dry matter, in this order: parsnip (most resistant), swede, celeriac, beetroot, carrot, turnip and radish. This reflects their water content and it's the densest, driest roots that keep best when frost deepens. So you want to harvest the last three by the end of October, and leave some soil on to help them stay moist in store. Leaving any root vegetables in the soil risks slug and rodent damage, whereas they keep well in boxes or sacks.

In my garden the only one I leave in the soil, until needed, is parsnip, and it tastes sweeter after sharp frosts convert some starches to sugars.



Beetroot can be lifted and stored in boxes of compost or sand

VEGETABLE HEARTS

Leafy hearts of tight-packed leaves do not like being frozen, even when frost does not kill the parent plant. Below about -3°C (27°F) you see damage because the tightly packed leaves are forced apart by ice. So before any proper frost, harvest any firm hearts of white, red and Chinese cabbage, chicory and endive. An exception is savoy cabbage whose crinkly hearts survive great cold; also, any immature, loose hearts survive freezing better than solid ones.

All hearts can be stored in a frost-free shed or barn, as cool as possible, and cabbages may keep until March, with occasional trimming of decaying outer leaves.



BEAN SEEDS

Runner and French bean seeds to eat are a good crop in early October, before any frost, such as Borlotti beans. They are easy to grow and do not need large incorporations of organic matter. I compared harvests of 'Czar' runner beans on a dug bed and an undug bed and there was little difference. You can save a lot of effort by simply spreading some compost on top and planting into that, rather than digging a big trench.

Harvest Borlotti and runner beans as dry, yellow pods to shell out the dry beans and store in jars. Or if they are still a bit damp when you pick them, pod the beans and spread on a tray somewhere warm to finish their drying.



Charles harvests yacons



HARVEST & STORE

YACON

Also called Peruvian Earth Apple, this is a fruity, crisp root which is damaged by freezing, so harvest before the first proper frost. In my undug beds the roots go down at least six inches so I lever them out in a clump, using a sharp spade. They can be kept until March in a cool, frost-free

place but because their water content is high, tubers shrivel a fair amount by late winter, though they still taste sweet and interesting. At harvest time, look to keep some of the buds on stems at soil level, to make plants for next spring: keep them in a pot of moist compost, frost free, then pot on in March or April, undercover.



WINTER SQUASH

You may have picked some already, at the stage when their stems shrivel, and the skin hardens and turns a deeper colour. Usually, the red, kuri types are first to ripen, and butternuts are last, except for new

butternut varieties such as 'Sprinter' and 'Hunter'. Bring harvested squashes into the house and keep them warm until they are all dry – they should store well indoors until you need them, March at the latest. Watch for any mouldy spots and eat quickly if you see that. Pumpkins are different and store less well than the

smaller squashes, so eat them first. And after mid-October, any lingering squash fruits are unlikely to ripen much more in the damp, cooler weather and shorter days. When they have soft skins and less colour, they taste less sweet and are best eaten now or soon, as they don't store for anything like as long as ripe fruits.

TOMATILLO

One of my favourite dishes is raw tomatillo salsa, with onion, melons and dressing. Tomatillos are easy to grow, suffering no diseases, but are less sweet than tomatoes. They are also delicious in a stir fry. Being quite watery they do not survive frost, so harvest any remaining fruits before it turns cold, even if the papery skins are not showing yellow, their main sign of ripeness. Another reason to harvest now is that they are prone to slug damage when left on the soil. ➤



HARVEST AFTER OCTOBER

OCA

This delicious winter root involves a frustrating wait because October is too early for harvesting. The tubers swell mostly after day length is less than nine hours between sunrise and sunset, which is some time in November for most of us. A snag may be rodent damage by that time, otherwise you may enjoy.



CELERIAC

Roots should be swelling now and harvesting can normally wait until November, by which time they may be a quarter heavier than in October. However, if celeriac leaves start to turn yellow and then rot quite quickly, it is probably caused by an annoying disease called *Septoria apicola*, or late blight – no relation to blight of potatoes but it develops in similar conditions – moist and warm. Roots still store alright but it's best to harvest soon after seeing noticeable damage and before all the leaves are dead. Also look to grow a resistant variety next year such as 'Monarch', because the disease spores may linger in the soil, and can affect relatives such as parsley and celery.

LEAFY HARVESTS THROUGH WINTER

Most alliums, brassica leaves and immature salad plants are frost hardy, so you can have fresh winter pickings of leeks, kale, Brussels sprouts and salads such as mustards, land cress, lamb's lettuce, land cress and rocket.

If growing undercover you can get better harvests of mizuna, mustards, spinach, tatsoi, land cress, lamb's lettuce, chervil and coriander. Pests can be a problem for young plants while they are establishing in the ground and I go out most evenings to check for slugs, often also finding large numbers of woodlice nibbling young leaves and stems, especially spinach. Usually, the damage is worst on recently planted and small leaves, so that once plants are settled in they can crop throughout winter and until flowering in the spring.



Winter salads –mustard and land cress are hardy

LEEKS

How leeks resist frost depends partly on the variety. For example, 'Autumn Mammoth' has that name because it does most of its growing in summer and autumn, making a long stem which is then vulnerable to frosts below about -6°C (21°F). In some winters it may not be this cold but if severe frost is forecast, I reckon to harvest my 'Autumn Mammoth' leeks and store them in a shed with some soil on the roots, for later use.

Whereas leek varieties such as 'Musselburgh', 'Husky' and 'Bleu de Solaise' have shorter stems and grow strongly in late winter/early spring, being shorter and smaller in autumn helps them resist extreme cold and then give good harvests in March and April, even on to early May when vegetables are scarce. ■



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LIQUID ASSETS

Shop-bought liquid fertilisers do an excellent job of perking up our plants. But in the true tradition of the make-do kitchen gardener, it's remarkably easy to make your own, as **Benedict Vanheems** reveals

As an avid kitchen gardener there's nothing better than bringing home baskets of just-picked produce to share with family and friends. It's the reward for all that hard graft – and you deserve it! Perhaps most satisfying of all is the fact that you've grown it yourself; you are literally reaping the fruits of your labour!

To get to this point you will have had to invest not just time, but a little money – for seeds, pots, compost and crop protection. But one ingredient that needn't cost a penny is liquid fertiliser; it's perfectly possible to make your own home-grown feeds that pep up plant performance just as effectively as any commercial alternatives.

LIQUID FERTILISERS

Most crops are hungry for nutrients during the growing season. A well-fed soil that has had plenty of organic matter added from season to season will have built up a good soil structure and natural balance of nutrients. Micro-organisms will gradually release the nutrients locked up in this organic matter, making it available for your plants to take up exactly when they need it.

But some plants need a bit of a boost to guarantee first-class cropping. These include

“Comfrey is a truly catch-all plant”

crops at a crucial stage in their development – fruiting tomatoes and curd-forming cauliflowers, for example – plants that are regularly harvested, such as cut-and-come-again salads, or overwintered vegetables that are starting into growth again in spring. Other vegetables may appreciate extra feed if they are growing on poorer soil or on land that has only recently been converted into production.

Many container-grown vegetables and fruits will appreciate a boost, especially in the second half



'Boeking 14' comfrey is sterile and easily propagated from root cuttings and division



Comfrey leaves



Picture: Sue Luxton

Worried about comfrey taking over? Then contain it within a girdle, such as this old tyre

of the growing season as the nutrients within the compost begin to wane.

For all the above, a fast-acting fertiliser is the order of the day – and they don't get any faster than liquid fertilisers. You can mimic shop-bought feeds by making a home brew from the nutrient-dense leaves of plants such as nettles and comfrey. It's easy to do and plants respond well to this garden-spun solution to quick-fire fertility.

COMFREY TEA

Any organic gardener in the know will already have clumps of comfrey growing away in a quiet corner of the garden. Comfrey is a truly catch-all plant: use it as a compost activator, dig fresh leaves into the soil or chop them up to apply as a mulch – even alive and growing it serves as a boon to the local pollinator population.

Its star performance, however, comes as the basis to a liquid feed. The secret lies in comfrey's exceptionally long roots, which draw up nutrients from deep in the ground. This super-charges its leaves with potassium, nitrogen and minerals such as calcium. To make a liquid fertiliser from the leaves – in this case a comfrey 'tea' – simply stuff a water-tight container to the brim with fresh leaves then top up with water. Allow to steep for two to three weeks before



Making a comfrey concentrate: the leaves can be bruised as you fill the vessel to give the rotting-down process a head start

straining into plastic bottles for storage. The gloopy slop left behind can be added to the compost heap.

Use the comfrey tea diluted one part to 10 parts water. Apply to fruiting crops such as tomatoes and cucumbers, or any plants in pots. Comfrey tea can carry a bit of a pong – so keep the brew vessel covered at all times! The plants have a habit of self-seeding and spreading like wildfire. For this reason the best variety to grow is the sterile 'Bocking 14', which is easily propagated from root cuttings should you wish to bulk up your comfrey clump. ➤



Picture: Graibeard

The sludge left after making a comfrey tea can be thrown on to the compost heap where it will help to enhance decomposition. You could also use it as a mulch around fruit canes and bushes



NETTLE TEA

Like comfrey, nettle makes a valuable liquid fertiliser. It's higher in nitrogen and contains potassium, magnesium and trace minerals such as iron, encouraging stronger plants with a better resistance to pests and diseases. It's the landlubber's alternative to mineral-rich seaweed – a natural wonder plant!

Nettle leaves can also be picked to make a delicious soup, or use them as a compost activator. Like comfrey, it's a magnet for all the right types of wildlife: aphid-munching ladybirds and a host of butterflies such as the comma and peacock.

Unless you really love nettles, it's perhaps unnecessary to plant this invasive weed – though one gardening catalogue recently hit the headlines for selling plants at £7.99 a pop! If you have some growing in your garden, I'd be inclined to leave it where it is as a boon for wildlife and a source of nutrients. Or collect leaves from an abundant source beyond the garden fence. Needless to say, wear thick, sting-proof gloves for the job!

Make your nettle tea the same way as comfrey tea. As well as diluting one part to 10 parts water, the resulting brew can be diluted to 20 parts water to create a foliar feed.

Dandelion leaves and flowers also make a nutrient-rich tea. Or make a weak compost tea by stuffing garden compost into an old pair of tights which can then be steeped in a water butt or barrel.

URINE BOOST

Give comfrey patches a valuable boost using what Lawrence Hills, founder of what is now Garden Organic, famously coined 'household liquid activator' – or pee to you and me! Fresh urine is completely sterile and contains major plant nutrients such as nitrogen and potassium. It's a resource we shouldn't be flushing away.

Collect urine cleanly and hygienically then dilute it to three parts water. Pour the diluted liquid on to your comfrey plants. Use a watering can with a long spout to avoid splashing the leaves. Err on the side of caution and stop watering it at least two weeks before cutting the leaves to make a tea.



DRYING LEAVES

Nettles and comfrey are herbaceous perennials, which means they die back over winter. If you want to make a batch of liquid fertiliser for winter or early spring just cut and dry the leaves to use during the dormant season. Drier leaves have a higher concentration of nutrients, so only half-fill the brewing container with the leaves.



Dried comfrey leaves ready to use



STEP BY STEP MAKE A NETTLE TEABAG

Teabags are a great, no-fuss way to make use of all the goodness contained within the leaves of plants such as nettles. Simply dunk your teabag into your water butt and use the



STEP 1: An alternative to making a concentrated nettle or comfrey tea is to make a teabag. Cut the nettles using secateurs or a scythe. Don't cut too close to the ground – you want the nettles to regrow.



STEP 3: Make sure your teabag is properly secured at the top by tying it with a simple knot. This way you can fish out the teabag, complete with all its contents, once it has finished leaching its nutrients into the water.



STEP 5: If you are not using a connected water butt, fit a lid to your barrel after filling it with water. This will stop flies from entering and contain any stench, though the smell should be negligible.

water as usual. After about a month the teabag will be spent and you can add another, overlapping old and new teabags by about a week to even out the strength of the water.



STEP 2: Stuff the leaves into an old pair of tights, squashing the nettles in until you have a good, firm tube of leaves. You could also use an old net curtain, gathered and tied at the top or some fine crop protection netting.



STEP 4: Dangle the tea into the water. This barrel will need topping up with more water to ensure the resulting brew isn't too strong. You could attach string to the end of the teabag to help you fish it out once it's finished.



STEP 6: Raise the barrel up so you can easily collect the nutrient-enhanced water. The brew will be ready to use from one to four weeks. Use the water often, as the leaves break down, so it never gets too strong.

WONDERFUL WORMERIES

Small gardens that don't have room for a comfrey or nettle patch or compost heap can turn to a wormery for their nutritional needs. Wormeries contain hundreds of worms that munch on kitchen scraps to turn them into two constituents: nutrient-rich worm casts and a liquid by-product, which is the runoff from the wormery.

The liquid runoff is full of goodness and makes a first-rate fertiliser for general use around the garden. Tap it off into bottles then dilute it with at least 10 parts water. Water it on to your plants and watch them respond with gusto!



Wormery runoff ready for use

POTENT CONCENTRATE

If you fancy something really potent, make yourself a comfrey concentrate. This is the closest garden-made alternative to liquid tomato feed. It's made by stuffing a bucket, tube or pipe with comfrey. The difference to the normal method is that no water is added. Instead, weigh down the leaves with rocks, another bucket – anything that slightly crushes the leaves as it pushes them down. As the leaves rot, they will ooze out a thick, treacle-like liquid – this is the good stuff!

The container that holds the comfrey needs to have a tap or hole in its base so that you can pour off the liquid as it collects. The concentrate is very strong so dilute it with more water than you would a 'wet' concentrate. I use it on my tomatoes with great results. The concentrate can be stored in a cool, dark place and keeps until the following growing season.

Home-grown liquid feeds are a great way of closing the loop and becoming even more self-sufficient. They're nature's helping hand, which any gardener in the know will take advantage of. And your plants will love you for it! ■

MAKE A cherry tree support



Wondering what to do with that straggling fruit tree that you never quite got round to taming? There's no need to procrastinate any more, as **Joyce Russell** demonstrates how to create a simple framework to give your fruit tree the best chance of success

Pictures: Ben Russell



I don't think I'm alone in having bought a bargain fruit tree. Nor do I think I'm alone in having stuck it in next to a wall while picturing the elegant training structure that will hold it in place. Roll on a couple of years and I still don't think I'm alone in not having got round to making the structure and feeling a little daunted by how this leggy bush of a cherry tree can be tamed.

So, let's start from where we are at: not with the perfect tree, or the perfect wall, but a small bit of ingenuity can make them look like they are in a short space of time. Like many jobs, this one doesn't take long to do and the results are so pleasing that really I'd encourage all other procrastinators to put aside a couple of hours and to enjoy the task.

DIFFERENT WALLS

If you are training a tree against a wall that needs to be painted, then it's helpful to make a structure that can lift the tree away from the wall just enough to facilitate this.

If you are training against a stone or brick wall that requires no maintenance, then you can screw fixings straight into this rather than using battens. Wires etc. will stay permanently in place. If a wall is made of a very hard material, then battens can be useful. You will only need to make four holes into the wall and the rest of the fittings screw into the timber. Make the structure to fit the wall, or to the maximum size that you want to train the tree to.

...AND TREE SHAPES

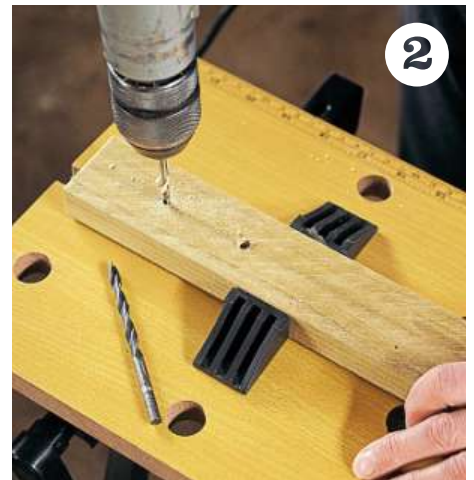
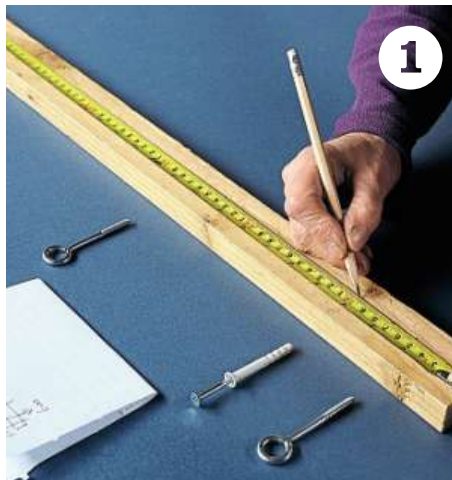
If starting with a newly planted tree, choose one that starts branching 30-45cm (12-18in) off the ground. Fit the frame and train the tree to fan out from this point. If you are starting with an established specimen with a longer trunk, then the frame can go higher up. This may not make maximum use of the wall, but you can always train some low branches to fan downwards. ➤

STEP BY STEP MAKE A CHERRY TREE SUPPORT

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Tools and materials for a 250cm x 100cm frame:

- 2 timber battens @ 45mm x 20mm x 100cm (pressure treated will last longest)
- 10 vine eyes @ 12mm x 75mm (galvanised or stainless steel)
- 4 plug-and-screw fixings 6mm x 50mm
- Galvanised wire
- Wire ties
- Bamboo canes @ 180cm
- You will also need a hammer drill, 6mm masonry drill bit, 4mm and 6mm wood drill bits, pliers, screwdriver, spirit level, hammer, tape measure.



STEP 1

- Measure and mark 10cm in from each end of the battens: this is where the plug-and-screw fixings will go.
- Measure and mark at 5cm, 27.5cm, 50cm, 72.5cm and 90cm along the length of each batten: these are where the vine eyes will go.

STEP 2

- Use the 6mm drill bit to drill holes through the battens at the points marked for the plug-and-screw fixings.
- Use the 4mm drill bit to drill holes at the points marked for the vine eyes.

STEP 3

- Measure the wall and mark where the top of each upright batten will go. Hold a batten in place and push a pencil or nail through the top plug-and-screw fixing hole. This marks the drilling point on the wall.
- Use the hammer drill and 6mm masonry bit to drill a hole at this point.
- Use a hammer to knock the plug-and-screw fixing through the hole in the batten and into the hole in the wall.
- Repeat for the second batten.
- Check to see that the battens look to be where you want: it's still easy to make changes at this point.

STEP 4

- Use a level to make sure the battens are vertical.
- Mark through the lower plug-and-screw fixing holes as at step 3, use the masonry drill (straight through the pre-drilled hole in the batten) and knock the fixings in place.

STEP 5

- Screw the vine eyes into all of the pre-drilled holes on each batten. Slide a screwdriver through the eye and use this as a lever to take pressure off fingers when tightening.
- All eyes should lie horizontally.

STEP 6

- Cut wire to the length of the frame with 30cm surplus; it's easy to trim excess afterwards.
- Thread wire through an eye on one side. Use pliers to twist and tighten. Pull wire straight through the corresponding eye on the opposite batten.
- Tighten and twist to fix. The wire should be straight and reasonably taut.
- Trim excess wire with the pliers at each end.
- Repeat until all wires are fixed in place.

STEP 7

- Slide the bamboo canes into position. Aim for an even distribution and to give a good spread over the frame. The canes can be rested roughly where they should go. Eyeball the whole thing and see how it looks.
- When you are happy with the angles and spread, tie the canes to the wires. Use short pieces of galvanised wire and use pliers to twist in place.

- Step back and look. Again, this is a point where it's easy to adjust before final tightening is done to hold the bamboo canes tight on the frame.
- You can add as many canes as are needed to support the branches that you want to train.

STEP 8

- Use plastic-covered tree ties, or rubber flexible ones. You can also use string if that's all you have got, but natural fibres will rot in a few months. Leave enough of a loop to allow branches to expand as they grow.
- Branches can be bent to fit the spread that you want, although it is safer to do this over a couple of years than to risk cracking a branch.

TOP TIP

Don't screw the vine eyes so far that they start to push the battens off the wall



TOP TIP

Choose one expert on fruit pruning, stick to their method and refresh your memory each year before starting to snip



IMPORTANT NOTE

It's best to make a frame when the tree isn't in leaf. This makes it easier to see what you are doing and how the bones of the branches should be laid out. The big problem with a cherry tree (also peach, plum and apricot) is that you must not prune them in the winter or early spring. It's so tempting to cut off the limbs you don't want, or to just nip a bit here and there to make it lie right.

Resist all temptation and tie in what you can for now. You can get out the secateurs in June and July and impose the required restrictions on the tree, at which point silver leaf and bacterial canker are less likely to infect.

PAINTING BEHIND THE FRAME

You can simply unscrew the battens from the wall, but the structure will have rigidity and the tree is less likely to be damaged if you fix two temporary pieces of timber horizontally between the two battens to form a rectangle. This can be eased forward a little so you can paint behind the tree. Support the frame and take care not to put too much strain on any limb. ■



Don't prune until June or July if you want to reduce the risk of disease



Fruit ripening beautifully on the frame

ANNE'S TOP 10 UNUSUAL EDIBLE FRUITS

Bored with the usual selection of common or garden fruits? Anne Swithinbank reveals her lesser-known favourites

When at home, my 21-year-old son often wanders into the garden and asks: "Is there anything interesting to eat?" He knows there are unusual crops scattered about, including fruits with novel flavours. There might be a handful of honeyberries, some fruity jostaberries, juicy apricots or a sharp goji berry. You don't need special spaces for these, as they are ornamental as

well as fruitful, so incorporate them into a garden just as you would other trees and shrubs, but use fleece or mesh fixed with clothes pegs to protect the first fruits from birds. Figs could have been a number one but have become almost too mainstream. I first tasted Chilean guava (*Myrtus ugni*) when someone brought a handful of fruits to a recording we were making in Cornwall. Their aromatic, spicy flavour was so memorable.



Photo: Suttons Seeds

1 CHILEAN GUAVA, UGNI BERRY (*MYRTUS UGNI*)

Related to common myrtle, semi-evergreen shrubs reach 1-2.5m (3-8ft). They need well-drained soil, and prefer a mild climate and shelter from winds. Flowers appear in late spring and the small, sweetly spicy, dark-red fruits are ready in November. They were grown commercially in Victorian times.

2 CAPE GOOSEBERRY (*PHYSALIS PERUVIANA*)

Grow these tasty fruits as a greenhouse annual like a tomato. Sow early in the year, pot the young plants on and they should fruit for you in something like a 25cm (10in) pot during late summer and early autumn. Golden berry (*P. pruinosa*) is bushier, slightly tougher and produces more but smaller fruits.



5 BOYSENBERRY

This vigorous, usually spiny berry arose in the US during the 1920s and is a raspberry, blackberry, loganberry and dewberry cross. Tough and great for difficult soils, it thrives on my plot where raspberries find it too wet. Large, dark maroon/black, succulent fruits are tasty and delicious raw when fully ripe during July.



3 HONEYBERRY, BLUE OR EDIBLE HONEYSUCKLE (*LONICERA CAERULEA*)

Native to Siberia, Northern China and Japan, this easy, hardy, deciduous and shrubby honeysuckle grows to 1.2m (4ft). Cream-coloured flowers appear in spring, followed by oblong fruits ripening to dark blue as early as May. When ripe, they taste like slightly acidic blueberries. Two plants give the best set.

4 MULBERRY (*MORUS NIGRA*)

Mulberries lend an air of antiquity to a garden and do best in warm, sunny but open sites. Trees are spreading but can be espalier or bush-trained. They may take eight years to fruit and by then, it is best to have a grass sward beneath, from which to collect the squashy, ripe but totally delicious fruits when they fall during summer.



6 JAPANESE QUINCE

(CHAENOMELES JAPONICA)

Many of us have Japanese quinces or 'japonicas' in our gardens and they often set large, hard, aromatic fruits late in the year. We're missing a trick if we don't gather and cook them into tasty jelly. They are slightly different to regular quince (*cydonia*) but hardier, more disease resistant and generally easier to accommodate.



7 PASSION FRUIT

(PASSIFLORA EDULIS)

The common blue passion fruit (*P. caerulea*) is hardy but the fruits are unpalatable. This passion fruit of commerce needs a greenhouse or conservatory with a winter minimum of 7°C (45°F). From a bed or large container, it makes a large climber bearing white flowers 8cm (3in) across, followed by purple fruits in late summer.



8 MEDLAR

(MESPIUS GERMANICA)

Medlars make attractive, unusual and fruitful garden trees. Large flowers open just after apple blossom, leaves give colourful autumn tints and then the structural fruits are collected and stored until they soften. I'm not keen on the raw, slightly rotten or bletted fruits but just before they reach this stage they make great jelly.



9 'BLANKA' WHITE CURRANT

(RIBES RUBRUM)

White currant and pink currant will grow in shady spots, carry their branches elegantly, flower prettily and then produce long strands of translucent berries. I pick and eat the ripe fruits while working in the garden during August. One day I'll make white currant jelly and suspend a strand of fruit in it.

10 GOJI BERRY, DUKE OF ARGYLL'S TEA TREE

(LYCIUM BARBARUM)

The goji makes a deciduous scrambling climber with silvery green foliage, small, purple flowers and red fruits. These are just about palatable raw when fully ripe. Flowering is on wood made the previous year, so tie in stems, let them fruit, then prune them out and replace them.



EXPERT'S CHOICE

I asked Martin Crawford, director of the Agroforestry Research Trust (www.agroforestry.co.uk) to nominate his favourite unusual edible fruit and he suggested the wonderful sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). Martin has created a fascinating forest garden at Dartington near Totnes in Devon full of fruit, veg, herbs and fungi all growing in harmony with each other. One of the top motives for growing unusual edibles is to bring a wider range of flavours to our tables and Martin said: "Sea buckthorn is one of my favourite fruits because of the unique flavour the fruits bring to sauces, preserves and fruit

leathers. Bright orange sea buckthorn jam is a favourite on my courses."

Although this beautiful, deciduous large shrub (3-4m/10-13ft high) grows well by the sea, it will also thrive inland on well-drained soil, in sun. For fruits to set, Martin's advice is to grow a male plant with one or more females for pollination. Sea buckthorn is featured in Martin's book: *Trees for Gardens, Orchards and Permaculture*, published last May. ■





GET GROWING

What can I do with all these tomatoes?

You wait months for tomatoes to grow and ripen and then suddenly have a glut. Our Facebook and website forum users have some top tips on dealing with a hefty crop

VISIT THE KG WEBSITE AT WWW.KITCHENGARDEN.CO.UK

FROM *KG* SOCIAL MEDIA SITES...

SAUCY TOMS

When I have a glut of tomatoes I love to make sauces, follow a basic pasta sauce recipe then add different things to them – sometimes courgettes and aubergines cooked on a griddle pan, or garlic and chillies, or I will roast vegetables and add these. I usually add some fresh herbs to them all, blitz everything once cooked and either freeze in usable portions or can them, labelling everything. I will then use these for pasta meals or add to bolognese etc. (Christina Smith)

TOMATO SAUCE

SERVES 4

- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 1kg (2¼lb) tomatoes, skinned, seeded and chopped
- 150ml (5fl oz) red wine or vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh basil or 1 tsp dried basil
- Pinch of sugar
- Salt and pepper

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan. Add onion and garlic and cook gently, stirring occasionally for five minutes or until softened but not browned.
2. Add the tomatoes, wine or stock and basil. Cook over a moderate heat for 20-30 minutes or until the sauce is thick.
3. Put the sauce in a blender or food processor until smooth, then rub it through a fine sieve if a particularly smooth result is required.



4. Add the sugar to balance the acidity of the tomatoes. Stir in salt and pepper to taste and reheat the sauce.
5. Use the sauce as required. Or pour it over freshly cooked pasta, toss well and top with shredded basil and freshly grated or shaved Parmesan cheese.

(From www.allrecipes.co.uk)

BEETROOT & TOMATO

Many more years ago than I care to remember we were in the south of France. We had a meal with an accompaniment of beetroot salad. We have never seen the recipe in any book, English or French. Here's the recipe – give it a try.

- About one cooked beetroot per person
- The same amount or less of ripe tomatoes
- Garlic – as much or as little as you like
- Virgin olive oil
- Wine vinegar
- Parsley

1. Dice the required amount of beetroot and tomatoes into 1-2cm cubes.
2. Chop the garlic.
3. Mix all together with a good amount of olive oil and about one-tenth the amount of wine vinegar.
4. Leave to marinate for as long as you like.
5. Serve topped with a generous amount of chopped parsley.

(Alan Refail from North West Wales)

CARROT & TOMATO SOUP

Extremely easy, quick and tasty

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 225g (8oz) carrots, chopped
- 225g (8oz) tomatoes, chopped
- ½ litre (17fl oz) weak vegetable stock
- Salt, pepper and bayleaf

1. Soften the chopped onion in a little olive oil and butter.
2. Add the tomatoes and carrots.
3. Pour in stock and add bayleaf.
4. Simmer for 20 minutes, then blitz in the blender.
5. Reheat and season to taste.

(Alan Refail from North West Wales)



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OVEN DRIED HERBY TOMATOES

This costs a fraction of those bought from the supermarket delicatessen.

- Cherry or smallish tomatoes
- Salt, pepper
- Oregano (fresh or dried)
- Olive oil

1. Lightly grease large flat oven tray.
2. Cut tomatoes into halves and place on tray open side upwards.
3. Lightly sprinkle with salt, pepper and dried oregano or finely chopped fresh leaves and the tiniest drizzle of olive oil.
4. Dry in low oven for about two hours (or more) until most of the moisture has disappeared and the tomatoes look slightly leathery. This really concentrates the flavour of the tomatoes.
5. When cool, store in small containers in the fridge. Keep refrigerated and eat within a week. You can cover with olive oil and store containers in freezer. The oil will congeal and thicken but will thaw when defrosted.

(Primrose from Buckinghamshire)



STORE FOR WINTERTIME

When and if I get too many to use I cook and sieve them and store them in takeaway-size containers in the freezer so they are ready for soups, stews etc. all winter.

(Plum Pudding, Stocksbridge, S Yorks)

JUST FREEZE

Last year I froze about 70 tomatoes in packs of six. They are no good for salads but for cooking with a knob of butter, then pouring on to a couple of rounds of toast for breakfast...takes some beating.

(Robo, St Helens)

WARM TOMATO SALAD

One of my weekend inventions to use up a late crop of tomatoes; something different from just eating them cold.

- Cherry tomatoes ('Gardener's Delight'/'Sungold') halved
- Medium sized red tomatoes sliced
- Basil
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Garlic

1. Slice garlic thinly.
2. Warm in olive oil.
3. Add tomatoes and cook for three to five minutes until soft but still whole.
4. Add chopped basil.
5. Allow to cool for a few minutes.
6. Eat warm with hot or cold meat or anything you like.

Some rounds of crispy fried chorizo make a tasty addition.

(Alan Refail, North West Wales)

The British tomato industry has a glasshouse area of 200ha, that's twice the area of all the football pitches added together in the British professional leagues and getting bigger!

TOMATOES & FETA

I have grown 'Marmande' tomatoes this year in my greenhouse on my allotment; they have been wonderful – very big. The skin peels off easily. I cook them for a few minutes then freeze. I can use them in pasta dishes as they are so fleshy and sweet.

(Linda Jaquenoud)

Cut tomatoes in half and start to fry gently in olive oil till starting to break down, then add cooked broad beans and cubed feta cheese. Once the cheese starts to break down remove from the heat. Add pepper but no salt. We have had this with a pork, chorizo and fennel casserole and a few new potatoes from our allotment. Absolutely delish.

(Catherine, Pendle, Lancs)





STILL GREEN?

At the end of the season you may have a lot of tomatoes that are still green but the conditions do not allow good ripening. The answer is to turn them into green chutney. Here website forum user Alan Refail recommends his favourite recipe.

"If, like us, you find green tomato chutney a bit boring and more a matter of 'making the best of a bad job' at the end of a poor tomato season, try this one which we have adapted from Nick Sandler and Johnny Acton's book *Preserved*. We make it every year and it gives green tomato chutney a whole new dimension."

GRILLED GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY

- 500g green tomatoes
- 275ml cider or white wine vinegar
- 50ml balsamic vinegar
- 125g muscovado sugar
- 100g dark brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2.5cm lump of ginger, roughly sliced
- 2 teaspoons of mustard seeds
- 2 teaspoons of Szechwan or black pepper
- 2 medium dried chillies
- 10 fresh sage leaves
- a couple of sprigs of rosemary
- a couple of sprigs each of thyme and oregano
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 500g apples, peeled and chopped



1. Slice the tomatoes and drizzle with olive oil, then place on a very hot griddle pan until browned but still firm and uncooked.
2. Heat the vinegars in a pan and add the sugars, stirring till dissolved.
3. Put the ginger, mustard seeds, pepper and chillies into a muslin spice bag.
4. Chop the chargrilled tomatoes and put into a pan with the rest of the ingredients. Simmer for at least two hours, stirring occasionally, until the chutney reaches your desired consistency.
5. Pour into sterilised jars with non-metal lids. The amounts above are enough for 3-4 medium jars.
6. Store in a dark place for at least three months.



Did you know...

In the UK, we eat 160g (6oz) of fresh tomatoes per person per week. This is the equivalent of two classic British tomatoes per week, or more than 100 per year – very low compared with other European countries, especially those in the Mediterranean region.

(British Growers' Association www.britishtomatoes.co.uk)

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PEST PROFILE

Did you know?

The term, winter moth, is a catch-all for three main species that attack fruit trees; the winter moth, March moth and mottled umber moth

Winter moth

With winter on its way a particular pest will be making preparations to feast on your fruit trees come the spring. We take a look at how to beat winter moths

THE PROBLEM

Winter moths lay their eggs near the dormant buds of apples, pears, cherries and plums and hatch during the spring and early summer. The caterpillars feed on the leaf and flower buds and later leaves and flowers until they drop to the ground on long threads and pupate in the soil around the tree. There is just one generation each year, but considerable damage and losses in yield can result from repeated attacks.

The adults are inconspicuous brown moths, some with prominent darker stripes when at rest, blending in easily with the tree bark. The females are wingless and crawl up the trunk of the trees from October to April, depending on species, to mate with the winged males. The caterpillars are loopers (forming a distinctive loop in their bodies as they move forwards) and are various shades of green, some with stripes. Most lay eggs singly or in clusters near the buds, but the March moth is distinctive in laying a ring of eggs around the stem.

THE SOLUTION

Control mainly involves trapping the wingless females as they emerge from the soil and climb the trees to mate. Sticky barriers such as grease bands or fruit tree grease are the traditional methods.

Winter washes such as Vitax Winter Tree Wash help by 'unsticking' the eggs from the branches while the tree is dormant, but if all else fails spray with a suitable insecticide such as Bug Clear Gun For Fruit & Veg, Py Spray Garden Insect Killer (pyrethrum) or Westland Resolva BugKiller (lambda cyhalothrin). Apply as the buds open in the spring or as directed by the manufacturer. ■



A range of products to help control winter moths

SUPPLIERS

- VITAX: www.vitax.co.uk
- NEUDORFF: www.neudorff.co.uk
- WESTLAND HORTICULTURE: www.gardenhealth.com
- SCOTTS: www.lovethegarden.com



Trunk greased up to prevent female moths from climbing to the canopy to mate

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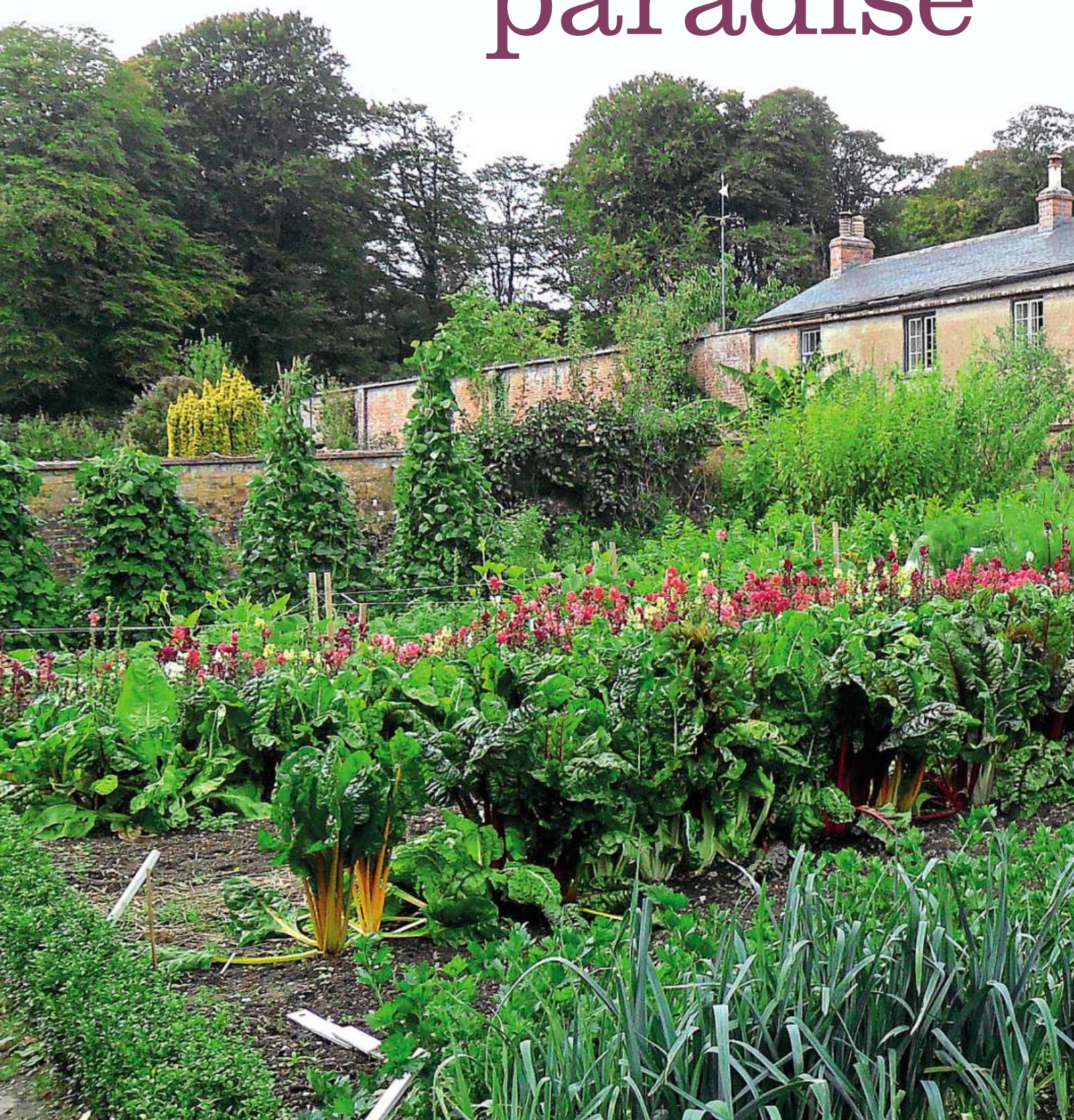
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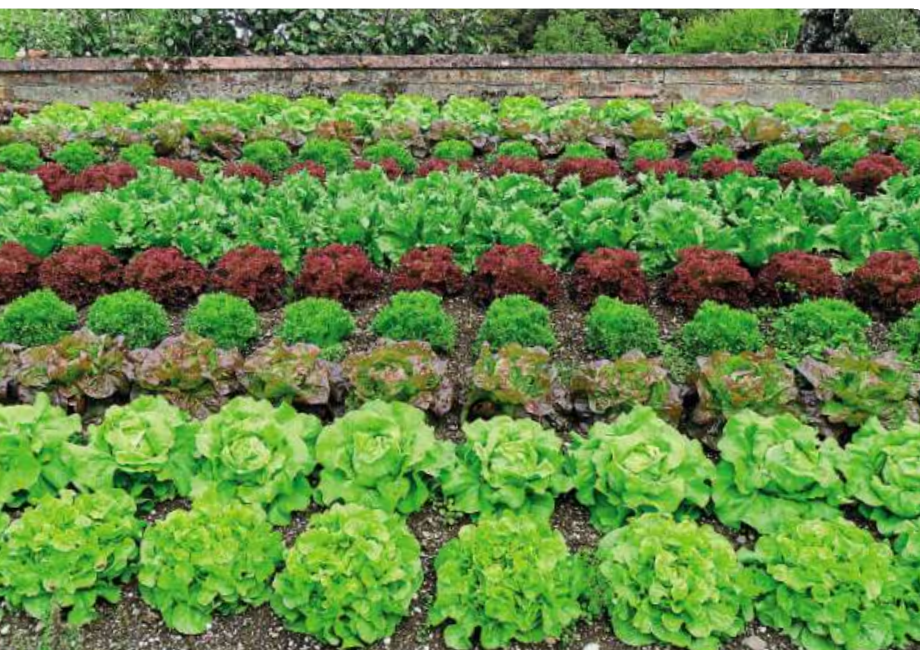
Trengwainton: A glimpse of paradise



Veg enthusiast **Susie Kearley** takes a tour of Trengwainton and shares the delights of one of Cornwall's most exotic gardens – and something for all ages to explore

For those gardeners looking for inspiration from a quirky garden with a hint of tropical paradise, look no further than Trengwainton in Cornwall. This fascinating garden, owned by the National Trust, is abundant with tropical plants and natural waterways. The jungle landscape takes you alongside a stream to a pool, surrounded by weird and wonderful plant life. Meanwhile, the old trees at the top of the garden look like they have an eerie tale to tell. ►





The flamboyant display of lettuces was captivating

As you cross the stream and enter the walled garden through Gothic arched doorways you find an orchard with beehives and chickens running about. Another entrance takes you to a plantation of tropical trees and bushes where an agave plant grows (from which agave syrup is extracted). An infusion of the leaf reportedly cures constipation and wind!

Before you reach the kitchen garden, you pass an acacia tree, which produces an edible sap called acacia gum. This is used in ink, watercolour paints, fireworks, bubble gum, cola drinks and on postage stamps. The bark is an ancient cure for stomach upsets, and today it is used for treating mouth ulcers and inflamed gums.

NOAH'S GARDEN

The pathway eventually leads to the kitchen garden, which is divided into five themed sections: community, pumpkins, pond, mixed plots and interactive. It was built in 1820 by Sir



Rose Price, and the walled sections were designed to shelter the fruit and vegetables from the elements. He built the kitchen garden to the dimensions of Noah's Ark, 50x300 cubits or 23x137m (75x450ft), but it remains a mystery as to why he chose this specification.

The first thing to catch my eye on entering the kitchen garden was the flamboyant display of different-coloured lettuces in neat rows.

Then, nearby, I spotted little green bananas on one of the banana trees.

"It doesn't have any bananas on it," said a volunteer gardener as I took a photograph. I had to disagree, and pointed out the early fruit. That generated some excitement among the volunteers who told me how much they enjoyed working at Trengwainton.



Green bananas

MEET THE GARDENER

I caught up with the head gardener, Phil Griffiths, who told me what he liked best about working at Trengwainton: "I do love the Noah's Ark story, no-one knows why he built the walls to those dimensions. Sir Rose Price was a social climber who did a lot to improve social welfare in Penzance – I think he was a bit of a show off.

"The walled sections provide excellent protection from the weather which, combined with being so far south, means we are able to grow things like olives, pomegranate and citrus fruits. The sloping beds are a favourite feature of mine – they were an afterthought and are very hard to cultivate, but I like them because they really add a burst of colour to the garden as you walk in. It gives the garden impact that you just wouldn't get from having everything growing at ground level. Also, because they face west, they enable us to make good use of the early-season sunshine and allow free drainage so that plants don't rot in wet conditions."

The pond was originally a dipping pond from which the garden was watered. It is now a wildlife pond, with an abundance of toads, damselflies, newts, water boatmen, and dragonflies all putting in an appearance at different times of year. "It used to contain fish but the local herons made a meal of them," says Phil. ➤



Trengwainton's head gardener, Phil Griffiths



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ABOVE: One of many wall-trained apple trees, laden with fruit



ABOVE RIGHT: The highly decorative garlic chives are much-loved by beneficial insects

As we moved into the next section of garden, there was an abundance of vegetables and a volunteer tending to the runner beans.

"We rotate plant families to reduce the build-up of pests in any one area and prevent depletion of any particular nutrients from the soil," Phil explained. This year, the plots contained potatoes and brassicas in plot one, root vegetables in plot two, peas and beans in plot three, and a mix of different vegetables in plot four."

We moved on and were greeted by an assortment of pots and tins, along with a sign saying that anyone can grow their own vegetables in any container. This section was designed to be interactive – from encouraging people to grow vegetables in pots, to suggesting they sample the raspberries; it engaged visitors in a hands-on way. By the time we got there, the raspberries had all gone!

There are more than 100 raspberry canes in this part of the garden, alongside many different types of blackcurrants, red currants and strawberries. Clay pots are placed over the rhubarb in the early spring and the darkness makes the sticks sweeter and more tender.

The walled gardens with their unusual sloping beds

TOAD OF TOAD HALL

Under the blackcurrant bushes I spotted a wooden box for housing toads. They live on land most of the year, only returning to the water to lay their eggs in the spring.

"Toads spend most of the night-time actively hunting for slugs and snails, so we want to encourage them. They are the gardeners' friends and we want to give them a good home," said Phil.

Wildlife is important to the Trust, so in line with its bee-friendly policies and desire to work with nature, the kitchen garden is run using organic principles. The soil is fed with manure, compost or seaweed; strong growing varieties which are resistant to disease are chosen; natural methods of pest control are used (only when necessary); as is companion planting (flowers that attract beneficial insects such as garlic chives).





LEFT: A volunteer tends to the box hedging

BELOW: There are 100 pumpkin plants and more than 25 varieties

HALLOWEEN HEAVEN

Heading back past the pond, we came to the pumpkin and sweetcorn garden. “There are 100 pumpkin plants and 25 different varieties in this section. Each plant has its own hole filled with manure, and within weeks the plants grow to take over the whole area,” said Phil, “We hold a pumpkin fun day every October and the pumpkin carving has become so popular with the children that we needed to plant more than 100 extra pumpkins in the orchard to meet demand for the event.” ➤

“We rotate plant families to reduce the build-up of pests”



ABOVE LEFT: Colourful winter squash ‘Sweet Dumpling’

LEFT: Squash ‘Turk’s Turban’

RIGHT: Sweetcorn thrives in the microclimate created by the walls





A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

As we entered the last section of the garden, dedicated to children's planting and educational activities, Phil said: "We are able to give a section for community use and that's really nice. This is called the community garden and it is used by schools and adult groups. Children participate in growing crops, clearing the ground, sowing, weeding, and harvesting the produce. Some parents have said that their children would never eat vegetables until they grew them at Trengwainton."

"Having the kitchen garden up and running adds something to the visitor experience when they visit and we are able to supply the tea rooms with produce from the kitchen garden, which really brings a sense of satisfaction and completeness to our activities."

Quince, grapes, strawberries and other tasty produce, make this whole garden particularly appealing to children who can sample the raspberries and get inspiration for their own plots from the weird and wonderful squashes on display. ■

OPENING TIMES AND PRICES

You can visit Trengwainton, near Penzance, between mid-February and October from 10.30am to 5pm, except Fridays and Saturdays. Adult admission costs £8. Telephone 01736 363148.

■ Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-trengwaintongarden for more information.



ABOVE LEFT: A thistle-like globe artichoke in full bloom

ABOVE: The sloping beds are difficult to cultivate but certainly add to the colour and intensity of the experience of being in the walled garden

RIGHT: Colourful 'Lollo Rossa' lettuces



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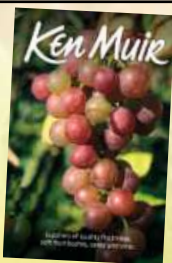


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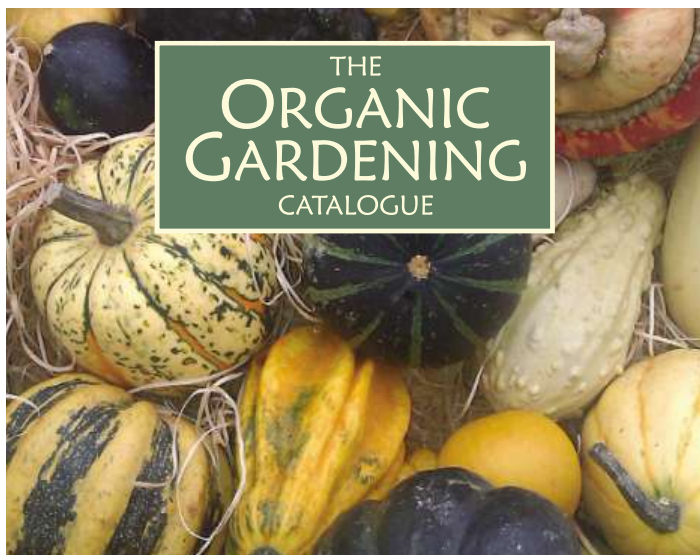
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ALSO, IN THE KG SHOP THIS MONTH...

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Autumn is the perfect time to plant onion sets, shallots and garlic. The soil is still warm from the summer and the days are still long enough to give high light levels. This collection of our best selling, best performing autumn planting alliums will give you an extra-early harvest – up to four weeks earlier than spring-planted varieties. You'll receive one pack each of:

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The collection costs just £9.95, saving you £3.90 on the normal catalogue prices.

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Onions are the mainstay of any allotment or kitchen. By planting a few special, hardy varieties in the autumn you will ensure a supply early next summer – before the maincrop is ready. We've chosen a yellow and red-skinned selection including:

■ **'ELECTRIC'** – An excellent addition to your summer salads! This beautiful red onion contrasts wonderfully with radar and will be ready a week or so later.

■ **'RADAR'** – Not only will this autumn onion be ready for pulling green in late May, it's ultra-hardy too! This mild and crisp tasting onion is a great performer and therefore well worth having!

■ **'SNOWBALL'** – White-skinned with a lovely, crisp mild flavour. 'Snowball' is winter-hardy and the bulbs keep well.


**SAVE
£2**


Buy a 250gm net of each variety for just £8.85 and save £2 on the catalogue prices.



GET THESE GREAT OFFERS AND MANY MORE ONLINE:

PRODUCT REVIEWS

GET CLEANING

With the growing season winding down a little now, it's time to start thinking about giving everything a good clean. Help is at hand with this range of products

**BEST
BUY**



PUT YOUR SHED TO BED

This kit contains a range of handy gear, including a wooden scraper, a sharpening stone, oil can, natural black soap and a

pack of pegs to keep things off the floor. The beech wood scraper is rounded so can be used for both curved and straight tools. French in origin, the black soap can be used on all sorts of things, from floors and tiled surfaces to barbecues to

windows, and the pegs are great for hanging your tools on at the end of the day.

► **NETHER WALLOP TRADING**
www.netherwalloptrading.uk
 ► **PRICE: £39.99** (free delivery if you quote Kitchen Garden)

KG verdict

A handy and versatile kit





ENVIRO-WORKS CONSERVATORY & GREENHOUSE CLEANER

This environmentally friendly cleaning concentrate liquid is for use on greenhouses and conservatories, and can also be used for cleaning uPVC, metal and wood. The pro-biotic nature of this product means that bacteria will keep on working and will also help to prevent algae and slime regeneration. It is also safe to use around pets, plants and wildlife.

➤ **GARDENING NATURALLY**

www.gardening-naturally.com

➤ **PRODUCT CODE:** CGC1

➤ **PRICE:** £8.48



KG verdict

Very effective – the treated glass and staging came up a treat



ALGON ORGANIC PATH AND PATIO CLEANER (2.5L)

An organic chemical, Algon can be used for cleaning patios, decking, driveways, fencing, outside walls, sheds, plant pots and garden furniture. You apply Algon with a soft brush or a fine spray (any time of year) and then leave it to do its job. It takes about a week for it to clear the surface but the benefit is that it will stay active for months afterwards.

➤ **PREMIER TUNNELS**

www.premierpolytunnels.co.uk

➤ **PRICE:** £9



KG verdict

Long lasting and effective but you will need to take care around plants



AGRALAN CITROX GARDEN DISINFECTANT (500ml)

This odourless disinfectant is a concentrated organic citrus extract suitable for a range of cleaning tasks – greenhouses, pots, staging, capillary matting, tools, pots, seed trays, pond accessories, bird feeders, bird baths and bird tables. It is safe for children, pets, pond life and plants. The top of the bottle has a useful built-in 25ml measuring container making it easier to get the ratio right when diluting.

➤ **MARSHALLS**

www.marshalls-seeds.co.uk

➤ **CATALOGUE CODE:** 1090-3534

➤ **PRICE:** £6.95



KG verdict

A versatile, odour-free disinfectant with helpful measuring cap





BIOTAL ALGAE & MOULD STAIN CLEANER

This non-toxic cleaner (500ml) can be used to get rid of mildew, algae and mould stains from internal and external surfaces, such as tiles, floors, window frames and paintwork in bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, greenhouses and polytunnels. It can also be used outside on stonework, wood, pebbledash and painted surfaces. It is a low-odour disinfectant and simple to use.

► THE ORGANIC GARDENING CATALOGUE

www.organiccatalogue.com

► PRODUCT CODE: BIMS

► PRICE: £7.65



KG verdict

Compares well on price with ready-diluted decking cleaners



WINTER TREE WASH (500ML)

This winter tree wash controls the eggs, larvae and nymphs of greenfly, blackfly and whitefly, and other over-wintering insect pests on most fruit trees and bushes: apples, pears, plums, cherries, gooseberries, blackberries, raspberries, blackcurrants and redcurrants. It is also suitable for use on vines under glass. One of the few products available to help combat fruit tree pests (also see p74).

► VITAX

www.vitax.co.uk

► GUIDE PRICE: £11.99

(available online and from UK retail outlets)



KG verdict

Easy to use and much less hazardous than the old tar oil winter washes of the past



DEADFAST GREENHOUSE SULPHUR CANDLE

There are some parts of a greenhouse that are difficult to get to, so this is a good supplement to liquid cleaning options. With a sulphur candle, the smoke emitted from the candle will find its way into the most difficult of places. This 300g candle is sufficient for greenhouses up to 3 x 2m (10 x 6ft). You will need to empty your greenhouse of plants, and leave all windows and doors closed for 12 hours.

► THE ORGANIC GARDENING CATALOGUE

www.organiccatalogue.com

► PRODUCT CODE: SUCA

► PRICE: £6.95



KG verdict

Great for cleaning hard-to-get-to spots but you will need to empty your greenhouse



WIN!

FANTASTIC PRIZE BUNDLE FROM GardenSkill

Gardenskill – the leading plant protection company – and *Kitchen Garden* have teamed up to offer three lucky readers the chance to win a fantastic bundle of Grow Your Own products from the latest range. Each prize is worth more than £350.

We also offer all readers the chance to enjoy a 10% discount on all purchases placed before November 30, subject to availability. Just visit our website – www.gardenskill.com – and apply the code KGNV15 when ordering any Grow Your Own products or ring us and quote the code to receive your discount. (Applies to Grow Your Own products only).

Gardenskill makes the best range of plant protection products on the market. We can offer the largest range of pop-up nets, cloches and tunnels – all manufactured to the highest quality to last season after season.

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GROWING GUIDES

WEBSITES AND BLOGS FOR ALLOTMENT GARDENERS BY TONY FLANAGAN



The Yes Chef

www.tessward.com

Tess Ward, the Yes Chef as she refers to herself, is a freelance food, lifestyle and travel writer. After leaving university, she trained as a chef in cuisine at Le Cordon Bleu, one of the world's leading culinary schools. Her cookbook, *The Naked Diet*, offers "a stripped-back approach" to food so that we "eat less processed, cleaner and simpler foods", bringing the body back to "its naked and pure state." Her recipes reflect this philosophy, combining

simple ingredients in creative and tasty combinations. This is a developing website but there is already a good range of recipes in different categories – bakes and roasts, breakfasts and smoothies, light bites, salads and more. The website is easy to navigate, and the recipes are well written, with the accompanying pictures doing them perfect justice. There are also videos of her making some of the dishes which show how easy it can be to make deliciously wholesome food. Tess's recipes show both flair and imagination, and will leave you coming back for more.

Child's play!

www.thekidsgarden.co.uk

We all know how beneficial it is for children to get into gardening but sometimes we need a bit of help and inspiration as to what activities will engage them, besides the obvious. The Kids Garden site does just that with its aim of helping children to enjoy "creative gardening". It's packed full of ideas and things to do. July's activities, for example, include features on pollination, soil, caring for indoor plants and making a wormery, with an emphasis on what children can learn. The site is organised into specific categories, such as Around the Garden, Planting, Safety, and Winter Gardening, and there are printable puzzles too plus Quick Tips, FAQs and Ask Our Experts sections. This is a very well-organised site, easy to navigate and has the right balance between picture and word – definitely worth looking at if you want some more ideas about what children can gain from being in the garden.



Waste not, want not

www.eatbyapp.com

It's common knowledge that we waste an awful lot of food as a nation, often finding food at the back of the fridge that we bought with good intentions but somehow never got round to eating. Sometimes we are so busy it is all too easy to forget what we have in the

fridge or freezer and when it should be eaten by. Consequently, we waste food and we waste money. This new application, Eat By is available on android and scheduled to be available on the Apple store, and is free. The app's basic function is to remind you when food is nearing its expiry date. You can type in the food item, set the use-by date and tag it as a fridge, freezer, kitchen

cupboard or open item. Alternatively, you can scan the bar code and add the item in this way. The food that needs to be eaten first gravitates to the top of the shopping list so you always know what to prioritise. It's simple to use and easy to navigate. What's more it could save your money and, at the same time, make you feel a lot less guilty about wasting food.



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KG BOOKSHELF

OUR ROUNDUP OF SOME OF THE BEST BOOKS FOR GARDENERS

Reviews by Tony Flanagan

EDIBLE WILD PLANTS & HERBS

■ Pamela Michael
■ Publisher: Grub Street
■ £15

This is a new and updated paperback edition of a book that was first published in 1980. If you're interested in foraging, this is a comprehensive guide to what you can find out there and what you can do with it once you've found it. The plant entries are alphabetically ordered, each section providing a description of the plant, including information on provenance, history, folklore and medicinal uses where relevant.

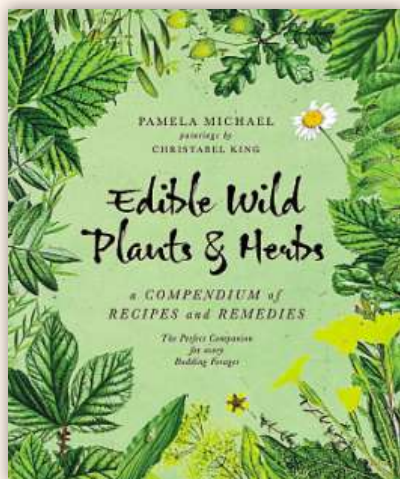
After each entry, there is plenty of information about what you can do with the plants you have gathered. For example, you could make a rosemary hair tonic, a rosemary moisturising cream or a chicken dish with rosemary.

You will find much to explore in this beautifully illustrated book, not only well known herbs such as mint and sage but also unfamiliar plants such as goosefoot, bog myrtle and pignut. Though some may find more in this book than they may wish to follow through, it does make you realise just what is out there waiting to be discovered.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Foragers, herb lovers, those in search of unusual flavours.

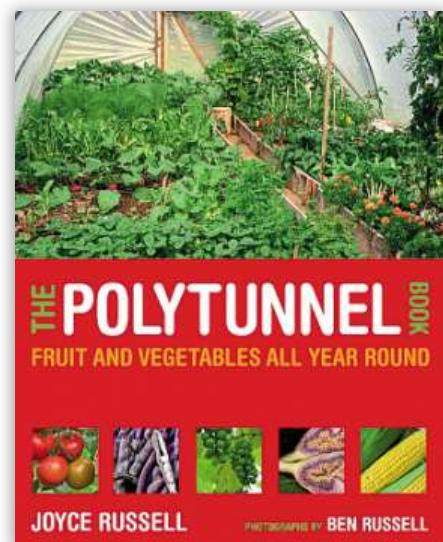
★★★★★



THE POLYTUNNEL BOOK

■ Joyce Russell ■ Publisher: Frances Lincoln
■ £16.99

Published in 2011, The Polytunnel Book recently achieved its 100th five-star review on Amazon. If you're lucky enough to have a polytunnel, or looking to buy one, this book has everything. First it provides practical advice on what you need to consider before buying a polytunnel – site, position in relation to wind, sun and shade, what kind to choose, preparing the land and putting it up. Then comes the fun part – sowing and growing! As well as a detailed month-by-month guide, there's also an alphabetical section covering each vegetable and fruit in table form, and sections on pests and diseases. Enhanced by Ben Russell's colourful and purposeful photos, this is a great book to have by your side, demonstrating the range and variety of what you can grow in a polytunnel – and all year round too!



WHO IS IT FOR?

Anyone interested in growing under cover.

★★★★★

STRAW BALE GARDENS COMPLETE

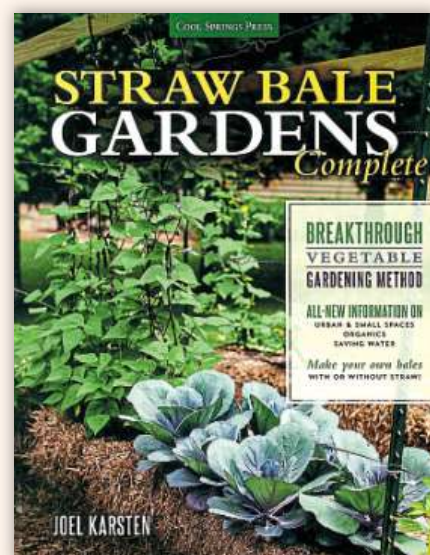
■ Joel Karsten
■ Publisher: Cool Springs Press
■ £15.99

One of the best things about growing fruit and veg is that there are so many different ways of going about things. One method that has come into vogue over the past couple of years is straw bale growing.

So what's wrong with everyday common or garden soil with lashings of manure, you ask? According to the author, the advantages over traditional growing are numerous, such as no need for weeding, an extended growing season, absence of soil-borne diseases, good moisture retention and wider options about where to grow your veg. And there are many more, the author contends.

A five-bale straw garden can produce a full range of vegetables which could include, for example, onions, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, carrots and cabbages. As for tools, all you need is a trowel – no digging or weeding required.

Karsten's book is lavishly illustrated, combining beautiful drawings with matter-of-fact photographs. There are chapters on conditioning the bales, planting seeds and



seedlings, greenhouse growing and what to do with the bales at the end of the season.

There is no doubt that straw bale growing is a fascinating method and well worth giving a go, even if only on a small scale initially. If you're tempted, this book will give you all the information you need.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Vegetable gardeners interested in experimenting with new growing methods.

★★★★★

GIVEAWAYS

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TO ENTER OUR GIVEAWAYS SEE PAGE 97 OR VISIT THE KG WEBSITE

ADOPT A TRUFFLE TREE

If you're looking for an unusual gift, a fun investment or a novel addition to your crop repertoire (albeit by proxy), branch out with French Truffle Tree. An English company based in Charente in South West France, it specialises in growing French Perigord truffles, which are highly sought after by chefs and sell for around £700 per kilo. Its new adoption scheme allows you to adopt your own truffle tree and enjoy its harvest each year.

The basic adoption package costs £99 and covers the cost of

planting an inoculated oak or hazel sapling and its care for a year. In subsequent years there's an annual maintenance charge, which covers the cost of irrigation, harrowing, weeding, pruning and harvesting. There's also the option of a £399 adoption package which covers planting and all maintenance for 10 years.

Truffles start being produced four to 10 years after planting, and harvesting is done with the help of specially trained dogs.

Adopters can choose to have their harvest sent to them for the



**1
PACKAGE
TO GIVE
AWAY**

cost of postage, or for the company to sell it and send them the proceeds.

Find out more at www.frenchtruffletree.com

We have one 10-year adoption package worth £399 to give away.



WIN A GRAND DAY OUT

Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire is a World Heritage Site. Steeped in history, the magnificent Blenheim Palace is surrounded by over 2,000 acres of 'Capability' Brown parkland and beautiful Formal Gardens.

We've teamed up with Blenheim Palace to offer you the chance to win a pair of tickets, which include access to the Palace State Rooms, Park and Formal Gardens and the fascinating exhibitions which bring their history to life.

Blenheim Palace is a masterpiece of Baroque architecture, and the Formal Gardens and Park provide a stunning setting. The Formal Gardens include the serene Water Terraces and the beautiful

Rose Garden, while the Secret Garden is a secluded area of winding paths and tranquil water. The newly opened Churchill Memorial Garden creates a journey through the lifetime of Sir Winston Churchill, who was born at Blenheim Palace.

The prize tickets are for a standard Palace, Park and Garden visit and are valid until June 30, 2016. They are not valid at special events, on bank holidays, or in conjunction with other offers, and are not transferable.

Visit www.blenheimpalace.com or call 0800 849 6500 for more information and opening times.

We have 10 pairs of adult tickets, worth £30 per pair, to give away.

**10
PAIRS OF
TICKETS
TO GIVE
AWAY**



GIVE YOUR NAILS A BRUZZ

It's all too easy to tell a gardener by their nails – and dirt-encrusted fingernails can be unhealthy as well as unsightly, as bacteria can get trapped there. But now beauty therapist Emma Myers has developed the revolutionary Bruzz, designed to make nail cleaning quicker, easier, less messy and more hygienic.

Unlike regular nail brushes, the unique design of the Bruzz cleans the top, underside and tip of the nail in one simple action. The multi-directional soft-touch anti-bacterial bristles, which are impregnated with softening vanilla extract, ensure the ultimate in hygiene as well as helping to keep nails healthy and looking good.

A simple squeeze of liquid soap into the centre of the Bruzz will get to work on grubby nails.

Unlike a standard nail



**30
TO GIVE
AWAY**

brush, its ergonomic ball design keeps all the liquid contained inside to prevent water and soap spray splattering the bathroom. The removable bristles make the brush easy to clean and are even dishwasher-safe.

The Bruzz is available in hot pink, blue and white and costs £9.99 from Boots stores and Boots.com. Find out more at www.bruzz.com

We have 30 Bruzz nail brushes worth £9.99 to give away.



TO ENTER GO TO WWW.KITCHENGARDEN.CO.UK/COMPETITIONS OR SEE P.97

SHEAR CLASS

Am I seeing treble or is that really a three-bladed shear? It's Darlac's DP910 Tri-Blade Shear, the company's product of the year, and shortlisted Product of the Year at the Chelsea Flower Show. This is the first of its kind to be launched in the UK. Its key advantage is that it enables hedges to be cut and topiary shaped in much less time than it would normally take compared to two-bladed versions. The TRI-blade shears come in three styles and is also available with fibreglass handles (DP900) or aluminium handles (DP905). This one comes with an aluminium telescopic handle, extending from 660mm to 890mm and weighing 1.125 kg.

PRICE: £35 www.darlac.com



GARDEN STORE

OUR ROUNDUP OF THE LATEST PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR KITCHEN GARDENERS



CRESCENT PLANTER

This unique crescent-shaped planter is designed to bring colour and life to the common garden water butt. Buttacup Flow is curved to fit to the side of any standard circular water butt and its drip-feed valve system keeps plants continuously watered even when you're away.

As well as dark green to match a standard water butt, Buttacup

Flow is available in terracotta, black and yellow. Installation requires drilling a hole in the water butt and then fixing the accompanying dripper. This allows you to regulate the water flow into your planter. Instructions for this are supplied and very easy to follow. If you want to remove the planter, a rubber bung is provided for plugging the hole afterwards.

PRICE: £11.95 each
www.buttacup.co.uk

GET POTTING

Looking for a potting bench for your greenhouse or polytunnel? This New Concept Potting Bench is designed for flexibility as it can be dismantled and reassembled in a couple of minutes. So when you no longer need it you can simply store it away using minimal space, or use it for a different purpose – for example, as a barbecue table or garage work bench.

This potting bench is 1200 x 600mm (4ft x 2ft) wide and 91cm (3ft) high. The framework

of the bench is made of zinc coated 25mm steel tubes which slot together. The timber for the top of the bench is made from selected redwood, planed on all four sides, and taken from sustainable resources. A spill board at the back of the bench prevents potting compost falling over the edge.

Two standard kits are available, one for fitting to a greenhouse and one for polytunnels.

PRICE: £69.95 (polytunnel kit)
www.grogardenproducts.com



TOOL TIDY

If you're guilty of throwing your lovely garden tools into the garden shed just any old how, then you're probably not the only one. Don't you just wish you could take more care? Garden Tool Tidy – perfect for the home, garage, shed or greenhouse – makes being tidy easy. Specifically designed to hold spades, forks, rakes, brooms or other garden tools, its compact size means that you can store your tools neatly and safely, rather than having to disentangle or trip over them every time you get them out. The two-shelf design means that the tools are secured in place. (However, note that this product is not supplied with the tools.)

PRICE: £15.99

www.twowests.co.uk



CHILDREN'S CORNER

The garden can be a magical place for children so why not enhance this with some imaginatively designed garden furniture specially made with young ones in mind? This five-piece Mushroom Furniture Set is made from strong and durable fibreglass and painted in colourful water-based paint. UV stable, this product is made to endure the vagaries of UK weather.



PRICE GUIDE: £299 (Available from various retail outlets) www.brundlegardener.co.uk



IRRIGATION KIT

The Micro Jet System Starter Kit is an irrigation system which will service up to 10 metres of flower bed/border, or three vegetable patches, and you can use it in the greenhouse too. It includes 90, 180 and 360 degree vari-flow jet heads with six stakes, supply pipe and all the connectors you need, including a pressure reducer to ensure your water pressure is controlled. The jets come with a 4mm feeder pipe and connector at the end which simply fits directly into the larger pipe once pierced. This kit can also be used in conjunction with a Claber Aquauno Logica Plus Water Timer which is battery powered, easy to connect and has a 15 programme pre-set system.

PRICE: Micro Jet System Starter Kit £29.99, Claber Aquauno Logica Plus Water Timer £34.99
www.easygardenirrigation.co.uk



SPIRALIZER APPETISER

Bring some pizzazz to your veg prep with this Lurch Spiralizer, endorsed by cookbook author and vegan chef Attila Hildmann. This spiralizer comes with three stainless steel blades: a 1.5mm noodle blade for fine cut 'raw spaghetti' shapes, one for 3mm noodles and one for 3mm thick spiral slices. The small diameter of the blade's locating peg results in less waste being cut from the centre of the fruit or veg. At the same time it produces long and clean-cut spirals guaranteed to bring a bit of flair to salads and stir fries. The suction feet



ensure stability during the cutting process and there is a storage compartment for the blades. This grey and white spiralizer is also accompanied by a leaflet of six of Attila Hildmann's recipes.

PRICE: £35.95 www.ukjuicers.com



REACHING THE HEIGHTS

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www.fiskars.co.uk



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DIARY DATES

TAKE TIME OUT THIS MONTH TO VISIT A SHOW, FESTIVAL OR BOOK ON A COURSE

SHOWS AND HARVEST FESTIVALS

RHS HARVEST FESTIVAL SHOW

OCTOBER 6-7. Lindley Hall, Vincent Square, London SW1. Grow-your-own ideas, advice, fruit and veg competition. 10am-5pm.

www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events

PUMPKIN FESTIVAL AND

SCARECROW AVENUE OCTOBER

10. Royal Victoria Country Park, Netley, Southampton. Includes giant pumpkin competition.

12pm-5.30pm.

www.jst.hampshire.org.uk

RHS LONDON SHADES OF AUTUMN

SHOW OCTOBER 23-24.

RHS Horticultural Halls, London SW1.

Ideas to extend the growing season. 10am-5pm.

www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events

APPLE EVENTS

APPLEFEST OCTOBER 3. Burgage Recreational Area, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire. Apple displays, identification, tastings. 10am-5pm. www.tenburyapplefest.co.uk

APPLE WEEKEND OCTOBER 3-4.

Trelissick, Feock, near Truro, Cornwall. 10.30am-5pm. 01872 862090

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/trelissick

HERITAGE APPLE WEEKEND

OCTOBER 3-4. Castle Bromwich Gardens, Birmingham. Displays of historic apples, orchard tours, fruit advice. 12pm-4pm. 01217 494100 www.cbhgt.org.uk

APPLE WEEKEND OCTOBER 3-4.

Hanbury Hall, near Droitwich, Worcestershire. Talk to the experts and buy apples from the orchard. 10am-5pm. 01527 821214 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hanbury-hall

APPLE AFFAIR OCTOBER 3-4.

West Dean Gardens, West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex. Apple displays, orchard tours, stalls, cookery. 10.30am-4.30pm. 01243 811301 www.westdean.org.uk

APPLE WEEKEND OCTOBER 3-4.

Fenton House, Hampstead, London NW3. Held in the walled garden and old orchard. 11am-5pm. 02074 353471

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/fenton-house

APPLE DAY OCTOBER 4.

RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon. Apple identification, displays, tastings, tips and talks. 10am-4pm. 0845 2658072 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor

APPLE FAIR OCTOBER 4. Forty Hall Farm, Capel Manor College, Enfield, North London. Visit the vineyard and orchard. 11am-4pm. 07713 488501

www.fortyhallfarm.org.uk

APPLE DAY OCTOBER 4. Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire. Taste varieties from the historic orchards. Talks on apple cultivation. 10am-6pm. 01625 374400 www.tattonpark.org.uk



Giant pumpkins weighed in at the Pumpkin Festival at Netley near Southampton (October 10)

OPEN DAYS, TALKS AND TOURS

WALLED KITCHEN GARDENS IN THE 21ST CENTURY OCTOBER 3-4.

Croome Court, High Green, Worcestershire. Walled Kitchen Garden Network forum. www.walledgardens.net

PERRY PEAR WEEKEND OCTOBER

3-4. Dyrham Park, near Bath, Gloucestershire. Celebrating the perry harvest. 10am-4pm. 0117 9371333 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dyrham-park

INSPIRING PLOTS OCTOBER 8.

Cleeve Nursery, Bristol. Talk by Lia Leendertz on allotments past and present. 7.30-9.30pm. 01934 832124 www.cleevenursery.co.uk

GARLIC AND ONION DAY OCTOBER

10. Seeds of Italy, Rosslyn Crescent, Harrow, Middlesex. Bulbs for planting, advice, recipes, 10am-3pm. 02084 275020 www.seedsofitaly.com

FRUIT SCIENCE TOUR OCTOBER 23

OR NOVEMBER 13. East Malling Research Centre, Kent. History of fruit science at the research centre – harvesting, pruning and storage. 10.30am-1.30pm. Book on 01732 523755 www.emr.ac.uk/short-courses

PUMPKIN WEEKEND OCTOBER 24-

25. RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon. Pumpkin trail, cookery. 10am-3pm. 01805 626800 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor

FRUIT WORKSHOPS

GROWING SOFT FRUIT OCTOBER 8.

Barnsdale Gardens, Exton, Oakham, Rutland. Garden tour and tips. 10.30am-12.30pm. Book on 01572 813200 www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk

FOCUS ON FRUIT OCTOBER 15.

Crown Nursery, Woodbridge, Suffolk. Choosing and managing fruit trees. 10am-12pm. Book on 01394 460755 www.crown-nursery.co.uk

GROWING THE BEST FRUIT

OCTOBER 29. Barnsdale Gardens, Exton, Oakham, Rutland. Fruit growing possibilities for any site, 10.30am-4.30pm.

Book on 01572 813200 www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk

GROWING BERRIES AND CURRANTS FOR BEGINNERS

NOVEMBER 7. RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Harrogate, Yorkshire. Introductory course. 10am-4pm. Book on 020 317 65830 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/harlow-carr

GROWING BERRIES AND

CURRANTS NOVEMBER 7.

RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon. Introductory course on all types of soft fruit, 10am-4pm. Book on 020 317 65830 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor



Some of the best growers exhibit their produce at the RHS Harvest Festival Show in London (October 6-7)

PLEASE NOTE

We have made every effort to ensure these details are correct at the time of going to press, but recommend you check with organisers before travelling.



Seeds of Italy promises a warm (if pungent) welcome at its Garlic and Onion Day (October 10)

GROWING APPLES, PEARS, PLUMS & CHERRIES NOVEMBER 7.

West Dean College, West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex. All aspects of growing fruit trees. 9am-5pm. Book on 01243 811301 www.westdean.org.uk

FRUIT TREE PRUNING NOVEMBER 14.

Hanbury Hall, near Droitwich, Worcestershire. Practical course organised by Pershore College. 9.30am-3.30pm. Book on 01386 554609 rhs@wrkscol.ac.uk

FRUIT TREES FOR BEGINNERS NOVEMBER 14.

RHS Garden Harlow Carr, Harrogate, Yorkshire. Introduction to top fruit. 10am-4pm. Book on 020 317 65830 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/harlow-carr

WINTER PRUNING OF TREE FRUIT NOVEMBER 17.

RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey. Talk and demonstration. Includes apples, pears and quinces. 10.30am-1pm. Book on 020 317 65830 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

CUTTING A DASH NOVEMBER 17.

Clumber Park, Worksop, Nottinghamshire. Fruit pruning workshop covering top and soft fruit. 10am-4pm. Book on 01909 544917 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/clumber-park

PRUNING FRUIT TREES NOVEMBER 18.

Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland. Introductory course covering a wide range of fruit trees. 10.30am-12.30pm. Book on 01572 813200 www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk

CHOOSING FRUIT NOVEMBER 24.

RHS Centre, Pershore College, Worcestershire. Talk covering soft and top fruit. 2pm-4pm. Book on 01386 554609 rhs@wrkscol.ac.uk

GROW-YOUR-OWN COURSES

NO-DIG GARDENING OCTOBER 3 OR NOVEMBER 4.

Alhampton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Veg and fruit growing with Charles Dowding, 10.30am-4pm. Book on 01749 860292 www.charlesdowding.co.uk

INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIC VEG GROWING OCTOBER 5.

Barnsdale Gardens, Exton, Oakham, Rutland. Theory and practice. 10.30am-3.30pm. Book on 01572 813200, www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk

GROW YOUR OWN OCTOBER 14.

RHS Garden Hyde Hall, Rettendon, Chelmsford, Essex. Autumn workshop, 11am-1pm. Book on 020 317 65830 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall

GROW YOUR OWN FRUIT AND VEG OCTOBER 17.

West Dean Gardens, West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex. First of two: winter jobs and planning. 9am-5pm. Book on 01243 811301 www.westdean.org.uk

VEGETABLES ALL YEAR ROUND OCTOBER 21 OR 28.

Barnsdale Gardens, Exton, Oakham, Rutland. Extend the growing season – for both experienced and novice growers. 10am-3.30pm. Book on 01572 813200, www.barnsdalegardens.co.uk

OTHER COURSES

MUSHROOM GROWING OCTOBER 17.

RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey. Growing mushrooms as part of the edible garden. 10.15am-4pm. Book on 020 317 65830, www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

APPLE COOKERY OCTOBER 23.

RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey. Orchard tour, variety and growing tips, cookery. 9am-1.30pm. Book on 020 317 65830 www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

KG OCTOBER GIVEAWAYS

Simply fill in the details below and return to us at:

Kitchen Garden October-15 Giveaways, Mortons Media Group Ltd, PO Box 99, Horncastle, Lincolnshire LN9 6LZ. You can also enter online for free at: www.kitchengarden.co.uk Closing date for entries Friday October 9, 2015.

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GET COOKING

Magical portions

This month Anna Pettigrew conjures up a medley of flavoursome dishes to whet our appetites, featuring celeriac, kale and apple

Try this
on a lazy
Sunday
morning!

DANISH APPLE AND MARZIPAN CAKE

A staple of the Danish kitchen is marzipan, and apples and almonds are simply a match made in heaven. Enjoy this deliciously light sponge cake with a dollop of crème fraîche.

SERVES 8

- 100g (3½oz) butter
- 200g (7oz) marzipan
- 2 large eggs
- 100g (3½oz) plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 apples, sliced
- 1 tbsp demerara sugar

1. Preheat your oven to 175°C/160°C fan/350°F/gas mark 4.
2. Grease a round baking tin, approximately 20cm (8in).
3. Core and slice the apples into thick slices. Set aside.
4. Cream the butter with the marzipan; then add the eggs, beating well.
5. Add the flour and baking powder, mix until smooth.
6. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin. Then arrange the apples over the top of the mixture, pressing them into the batter as you go along.
7. Sprinkle over the demerara sugar and bake for 45-50 minutes until golden and springy to the touch. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, then turn out of the tin. Cool on a wire rack.



TOFFEE APPLE FRENCH TOAST

This toffee apple dish is certainly for the sweet toothed! But it's a great treat to serve for a birthday breakfast or on a lazy Sunday morning.

SERVES 4

- 2 medium apples, peeled and sliced
- 150g (5oz) brown sugar
- 4 tbsp butter
- 6 slices of soft bread
- 2 free-range eggs
- 120ml (4fl oz) milk
- 4 tbsp flour
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

1. Add the sugar and butter in a medium-sized saucepan. Cook over medium high heat until dissolved, then add the apples, and cook on low heat for five minutes. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl whisk the eggs, milk and cinnamon. Sift in the flour and whisk until smooth.
3. Dip the bread into the mixture, coating both sides.
4. Cook the slices in a large pan over medium heat for 1-2 minutes, turning once, until lightly browned.
5. Serve the toast with the apples and toffee sauce poured over. ➤



CELERIAC REMOULADE

This recipe for celeriac remoulade goes down well as a starter, and is delicious served with smoked mackerel and a side salad.

SERVES 4

- ½ celeriac
- ½ lemon, juice of
- 2 tbsp double cream
- 3 tbsp good-quality mayonnaise
- 2 tsp whole grain mustard
- Salt and pepper

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the mayonnaise, mustard, cream and lemon juice together thoroughly; add a generous sprinkling of salt and some freshly ground black pepper.
2. Peel and quarter the celeriac, then grate coarsely and stir into the mayonnaise mixture until evenly coated.
3. Serve.



WARM SALAD OF KALE & SWEET POTATO

Roasting is a very easy but satisfying way to prepare vegetables. For this warm salad, healthy kale is paired with sweet potato for a deliciously light meal.

SERVES 2

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, diced
- 50g (2oz) mixed nuts, chopped
- 1tbsp olive oil
- 225g (8oz) kale, chopped
- 200g (7oz) quinoa
- 500ml (18fl oz) water
- 1 orange, juice of
- 50ml (2fl oz) balsamic vinegar
- 1tbsp honey
- Salt and pepper

1. Preheat your oven to 200°C/190°C fan/gas 6.
2. In a roasting pan, toss the sweet potato and nuts in the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for 25 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, rinse the quinoa. Add 500ml (18oz) of water to a saucepan and add the rinsed quinoa. Bring the quinoa to a boil, cover and reduce heat and simmer for 12 minutes. Drain and set aside.
4. Combine the orange juice, balsamic vinegar and honey, set aside.
5. Five minutes before the sweet potatoes are done, add the kale to the roasting pan, and mix in. Roast for the remaining five minutes.
6. Remove the roasting pan from the oven, and mix the quinoa with the roasted vegetables.
7. Pour over the dressing, and serve.



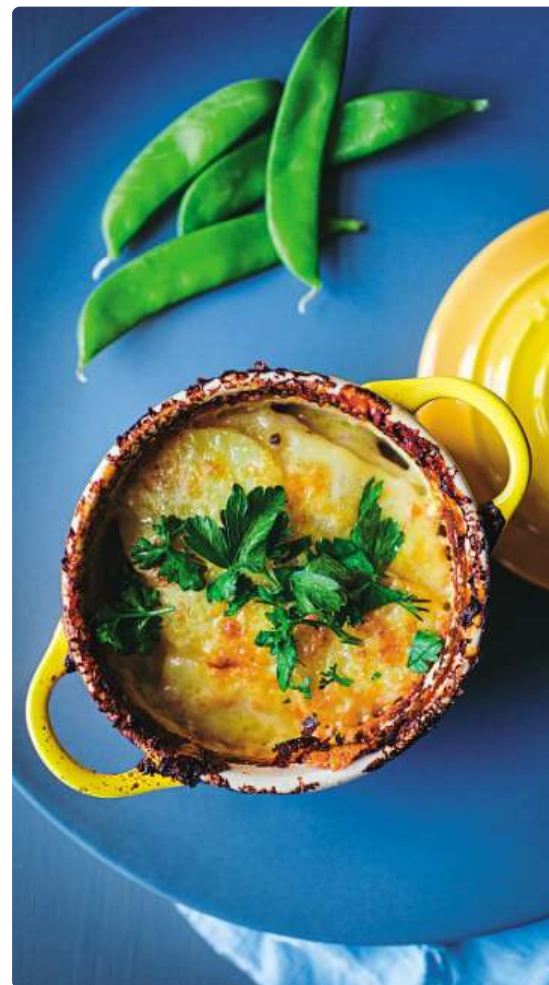
KALE STUFFED MUSHROOMS

This dish is a taste sensation that's juicy and full of flavour. Serve on a bed of wilted spinach with a side of garlic bread.

SERVES 4

- 4 large portobello mushrooms
- 200g (7oz) veggie or real mince
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 225g (8oz) kale, chopped
- 1 shallot, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 4 cherry tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato chutney
- 2 tbsp oregano
- Salt and pepper

1. Preheat your oven to 200°C/190°C fan/400°F/gas 6. Remove the stalks from the mushrooms, set aside. Place the mushrooms in an ovenproof dish, set aside.
2. Melt the butter in a small saucepan, then add the flour. Stir continuously to form the roux (paste).
3. Add the milk to the roux gradually, stirring as you go, until you get a smooth sauce. Cook for a further 2-3 minutes, stirring continuously, until the sauce has thickened. Season to taste. Set aside.
4. Add the olive oil to a frying pan, then add the onion and garlic. Cook for a minute.
5. Next add the mince and brown for 3-4 minutes.
6. Add the mushroom stalks, kale, tomatoes, garlic, chutney and oregano, mix to combine. Season with salt and pepper. Cook for two minutes. Then scoop the mixture into the mushrooms, and top with the white sauce.
7. Bake for 25 minutes until golden and bubbling.



CELERIAC GRATIN

This is a very indulgent way to serve up the humble celeriac. It's easy to construct and lovely served with a side of greens or fish.

SERVES 4

- 400g (14oz) waxy potatoes, peeled and sliced into 1cm (½in) slices
- 1 large celeriac, peeled and sliced into 1cm (½in) slices
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 75g (2½oz) Cheddar cheese, grated
- 500ml (18oz) double cream
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 small bunch fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked, stalks roughly chopped

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/190°C fan/gas 6.
2. Layer the potatoes, celeriac and garlic, alternating between the three, into four individual ramekins, and season generously.
3. Pour over the cream, and top with Cheddar cheese.
4. Bake in the preheated oven for 35-40 minutes, or until tender. Sprinkle the leaves on top and serve with mangetout or broccoli. ■

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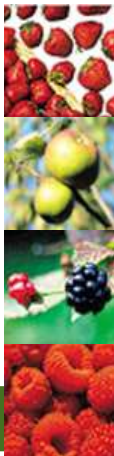
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LAST WORD



David with a weedy challenge ahead of him



The plot after it had been tamed



When David Johnson from Bognor Regis retired he took on an allotment and began a journey to horticultural knowledge and retirement bliss

An allotment had always been part of my retirement plan. I had a basic knowledge of veg growing in the back garden, just a few tomatoes, runner beans and courgettes but never enough time.

I took over plot 34 at St Michael's near Bognor Regis in October 2011. I have a make do and mend attitude and hoped to achieve this for as little cost as possible. I don't grow for the show bench, just the dinner table, so I try to work organically. We are woefully short of hedgehogs, frogs and birds (apart from the dreaded pigeons), so I have had to resort to slug pellets – sorry, but the losses were too great.

My soil is very heavy clay, which is either sodden or rock hard, so forget fine tilth. The previous holder left me with three large and two small raised beds, for which I thank him. He, however, rotovated during his one season, thus multiplying the weed population, in particular red shank that ended up head high. My goal is to be able to use a hoe rather than hand-weed with a knife, so each year I have put on vast quantities of horse manure, and this winter, on the advice of Greg (plot 37), fresh seaweed. One of the bonuses of being an allotment holder is the community who are happy to share advice, tips, plants and gluts. I always make sure I call upon them first if I have a problem.

Having an allotment has given me an education on lots of subjects. I can now identify keel slugs, garden slugs, wireworms, leatherjackets and cabbage white and their offspring. I know the difference between a centipede and a millipede and which one to love or exterminate. Last year my broad beans hosted every blackfly in West Sussex along with some bright orange beetles, who turned out to be soldier beetles that happily feasted on the fly; so glad I checked.

Thanks to *Kitchen Garden* I have tried papier-mâché paths (only a few sheets blew away), a builder's-bag raised bed, which would have worked better if I had filled it to the top. I have learnt how to prune an apple tree, and my spud yield improved thanks to the advice about putting seaweed in the bottom of the trench.

This season I am trying crushed eggshells on my brassica bed as a source of free lime, and two new raised beds filled with homemade compost, so hopefully I might be able to hoe.

I have endured floods, strong winds (which blew my shed over) mice, rabbits and blight, but have had successes and get joy out of watching my young seedlings grow and develop. I think it's the taste of fresh veg and the feeling of achievement when the Sunday roast has spuds, parsnips, carrots, runner beans and mashed swede followed by fresh strawberries, all from my plot - retirement bliss. ■



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MAKE POTS OF PRESERVES

Capture your crops in jars



*KG Chef Anna Pettigrew's
delicious recipes inside*

**Kitchen
Garden**

SWEETCORN RELISH | SWEET CHILLI JELLY | PEAR & GINGER JAM
TOMATO CHUTNEY | RED ONION MARMALADE | LIME PICKLE

TOP TIPS *for* MAKING PRESERVES



Pectin in fruit causes sweet preserves to set when mixed with sugar. High pectin fruits give a good set and include apples, blackcurrants, plums, quinces, gooseberries and red and white currants. Low pectin fruits include strawberries, peaches, pears and blackberries. It helps to mix high pectin fruits with low.



Salting vegetable pieces for a couple of hours or more before turning into pickles helps remove excess moisture and keeps pickles crunchy.



How much sugar you use in jams can determine the length of storage time. A very sweet jam using equal quantities of fruit and sugar can be stored for up to 12 months.



Apples are a perfect ingredient for chutneys. Cooking apples will give a smoother texture and eating apples a more textured and sweeter chutney.



When filling jars tap the jar gently on a firm surface to remove air pockets.



Pickling is a great way to preserve especially for firmer vegetables and fruit such as onions, shallots, beetroot, limes, pears, courgette, beans, chillies, damsons and many more.



A jam made with an assortment of berries is called a jumbleberry jam.



Fruit jellies are a delicious accompaniment to meat. Pick fruit that's just slightly underripe but still juicy. Boil for the minimum time necessary to obtain the best set.



Chutneys are like a good wine – they improve with age, so leave to mature a little before using.



Some vegetables can be used for making jams but need to be combined with a high pectin source such as apples. An ideal vegetable to use is carrot which has a little pectin and is fairly sweet. You can use other vegetables such as aubergines, marrows, peppers, squashes and tomatoes.

Welcome

We hope you enjoy this supplement filled with recipes using some of your late-harvested crops. Our *Kitchen Garden* chef, Anna Pettigrew, has created delicious relishes, jelly, chutney, marmalade and jam mostly using produce you may have grown yourself, so harvest, cook and feast.

Emma Rawlings
Deputy Editor

Emma



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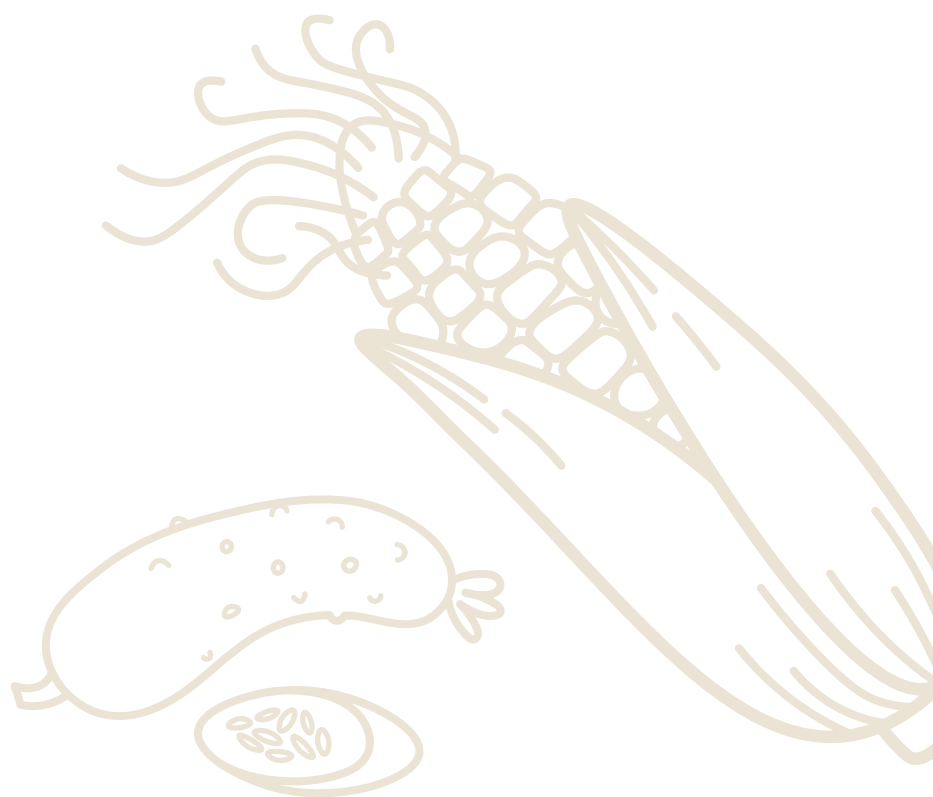
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Clean your jars

When making any of the following recipes it is important the jars are sterilised to prevent the food spoiling.

- 1 Heat the oven to 140°C (120°C fan) or gas mark 1.
- 2 Wash the jars in hot, soapy water and then rinse.
- 3 Place the jars on a baking sheet and put them in the oven to dry. If using Kilner jars, the rubber seals should be removed and put in boiling water and then left to dry.





SWEETCORN RELISH

An excellent accompaniment to any barbecue burger or hot dog – and it only takes 20 minutes to prepare.

Makes 1 x 350g jar

- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 200 – 250g (7½oz) fresh corn (about two cobs)
- ¼ cucumber, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 75ml (2½fl oz) cider vinegar
- 25g (1oz) caster sugar
- ½ tsp dry mustard powder
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp turmeric
- handful coriander seeds
- 1 tsp cornflour

1. Heat the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pan. Tip in the shallot and sweat for five minutes until softened. Stir in the remaining ingredients together with ½ tsp salt.

2. Add the cornflour to the pan, stir in, then bring to the boil, and cook for 20 minutes.

3. Put into a sterilised jar, seal and label when cold.

4. Store the relish in the fridge. If unopened, it will keep for one month. Once opened, store in fridge for two weeks.



SWEET CHILLI JELLY

A hot and sweet jelly for adding to sandwiches, curries or stews for an extra kick. You can use any of your home-grown chillies for this recipe, but red chillies do look the part.

4 x 250ml jars

- 1kg (2lb) granulated sugar
- 400ml (14fl oz) white wine vinegar
- 200g (7oz) red chillies
- 1 large red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 3 cooking apples, pierced with a fork

1. Start by sterilising three or four small jars and their lids in the oven for 15 minutes at 140°C/275°F/gas mark 1. Place a small saucer in the fridge.

2. Chop the chillies finely or give them a quick whizz in a blender to avoid sore hands.

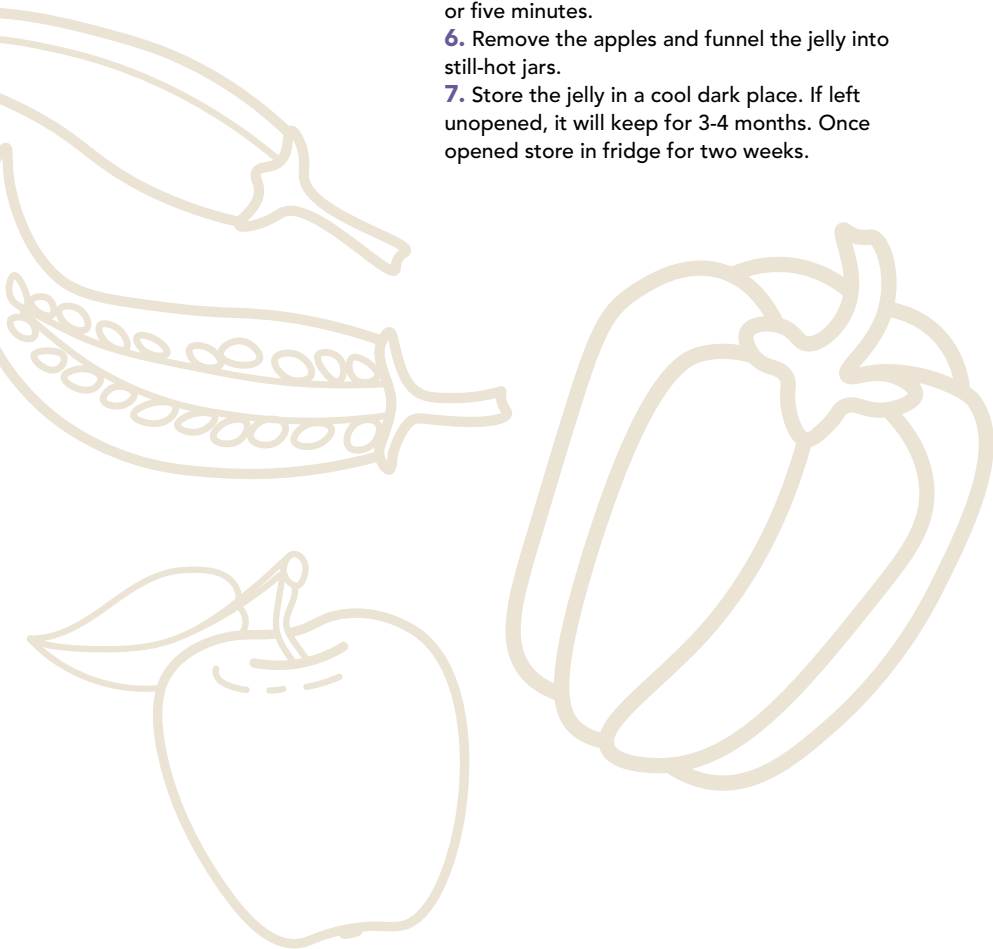
3. Place the sweet and chilli peppers in a large saucepan together with 400ml (14fl oz) vinegar, sugar and the cooking apples.

4. Bring everything to a simmer, then cook at a rolling boil for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon.

5. Turn off the heat, take the saucer out of the fridge and drop a little jelly on it. Put it back in the fridge, wait a couple of minutes and see whether it's begun to set, in which case you can start filling your jars. If not, put the jelly to boil again and check for set after another four or five minutes.

6. Remove the apples and funnel the jelly into still-hot jars.

7. Store the jelly in a cool dark place. If left unopened, it will keep for 3-4 months. Once opened store in fridge for two weeks.









TOMATO CHUTNEY

This is a great recipe if your tomatoes ripened all at once. It's great to give as a gift, or keep it yourself and serve with some cheese and biscuits.

Makes 4-5 x 250g jars

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 red onions, finely chopped
- 700g (1½lbs) homegrown tomatoes, chopped
- 2 apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbsp sultanas
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- 250ml (9fl oz) cider vinegar
- 300g (10½oz) soft light brown sugar
- 2tsp black pepper



1. Start by sterilising four to five 250g jars and their lids in the oven for 15 minutes at 140°C/275°F/gas mark 1.

2. Sweat the red onion in the olive oil in a large heavy-based saucepan over a low heat until soft.

3. Add the chopped tomatoes, apples, sultanas, chilli, garlic, pepper, vinegar and sugar. Bring the mixture to the boil, then simmer for about 30 minutes.

4. By now the chutney should be very thick and you can draw a wooden spoon across the base of the pan so that it leaves a channel behind it that does not immediately fill with liquid. If not, bring to a rolling boil for a further five minutes or until thick.

5. Allow to stand for a few minutes, then pour into the sterilised jars.

6. Cover with screw top lids, then label when cold.

7. Store the chutney in a cool dark place. If left unopened, it will keep for 6-12 months. Once opened store in fridge for four weeks.

RED ONION MARMALADE

This is up there with the best preserves – sweet, sticky and perfect with a ploughman's lunch or a slice of quiche.

MAKES 4-5 X 370G JARS

- 2kg (4lbs 6oz) red onions
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 150g (5oz) butter
- 160g (5½oz) golden caster sugar
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaf
- 375ml (13fl oz) red wine
- 450ml red wine vinegar
- 400ml water

1. Start by sterilising the jars and their lids in the oven for 15 minutes at 140°C/275°F/gas mark 1.

2. Very thinly slice the onions.

3. Melt the butter in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Tip in the onions and stir to coat in butter. Cook gently for between seven and 10 minutes.

4. Sprinkle over the sugar, and mix in. Cook uncovered for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are very soft and sticky.

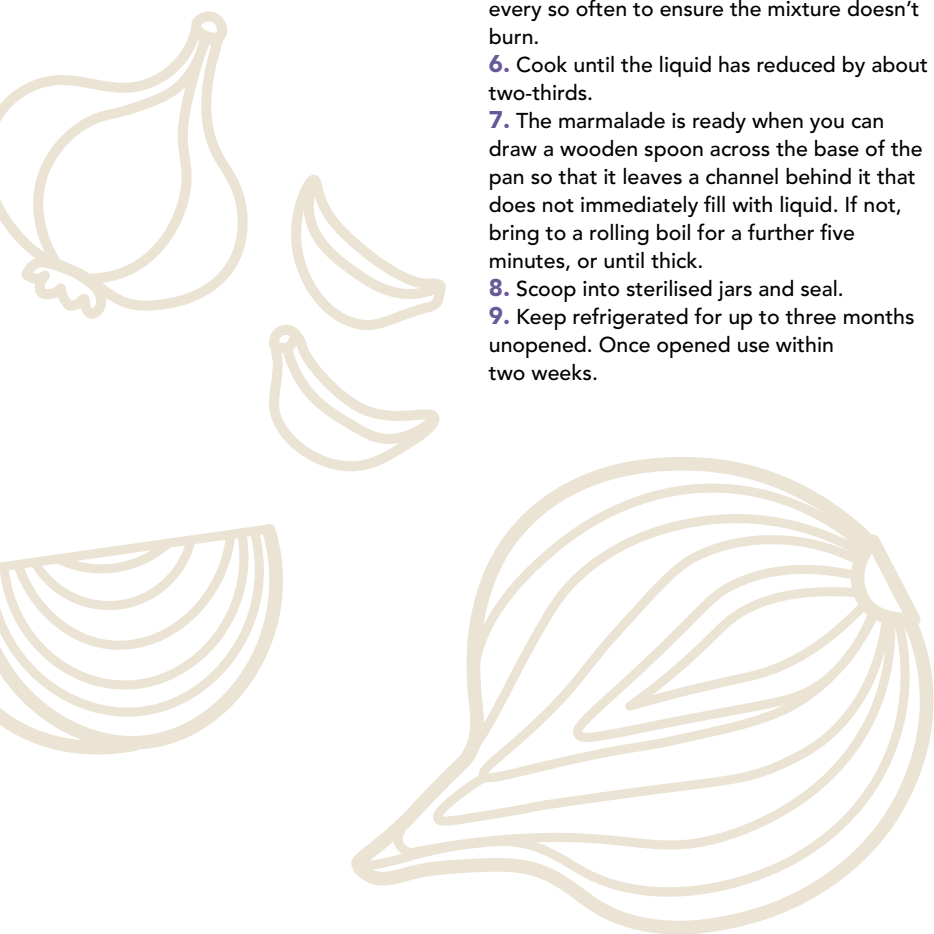
5. Pour in the wine, water, vinegar, garlic and thyme and simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring every so often to ensure the mixture doesn't burn.

6. Cook until the liquid has reduced by about two-thirds.

7. The marmalade is ready when you can draw a wooden spoon across the base of the pan so that it leaves a channel behind it that does not immediately fill with liquid. If not, bring to a rolling boil for a further five minutes, or until thick.

8. Scoop into sterilised jars and seal.

9. Keep refrigerated for up to three months unopened. Once opened use within two weeks.









LIME & CHILLI PICKLE

Lime pickle is a hot and sour fermented conserve, perfect for serving with curries and poppadoms.

Makes 1 x 250g jar

- 4 green limes
- 1 inch piece root ginger, sliced
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 10 cayenne chillies, sliced
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil

- 1.** Quarter the limes. Place in a large jar with 1 tsp of salt and seal. Mix the salt up by shaking, then leave in a sunny spot for three to four days.
- 2.** After three days, add the remaining salt to the jar, shake, then leave for one month on a sunny windowsill, rotating the jar every few days.
- 3.** Heat the oil in a pan and fry the ginger until golden.
- 4.** Add the vinegar, limes and lime juice from the jar. Mix well and cook for about five minutes.
- 5.** Add the spices, garlic and chillies, and cook for a further three minutes.
- 6.** Store in sterilised jars and keep in the fridge for up to one month.

PEAR & GINGER JAM

This is a lovely fragrant jam using the aromatic pear. It has subtle hints of lemon and ginger and is great for breakfast or with cheese after dinner.

Makes 4-5 x 370g jars

- 2 kg (4½lb) pears, peeled, cored and chopped
- 1 large lemon, juice and zest of
- 1 kg (2lbs 3oz) granulated sugar
- 1 litre of water
- 1 thumb piece size of ginger, peeled

Storing

Store the jam in a cool dark place. If left unopened, it will keep for 12 months. Once opened store in fridge for eight weeks.

1. Start by sterilising four to five 370g jars and their lids in the oven for 15 minutes at 140°C/275°F/gas mark 1. Place a small saucer in the fridge.
2. Add the water, chopped pears, ginger, lemon zest and juice to a large heavy-bottomed saucepan.
3. Simmer very gently until the pears are just soft – roughly 15 minutes.
4. Pour in the sugar and stir over a very low heat until all the sugar is dissolved.
5. Now bring to a rolling boil, and boil for 10 minutes before testing for a set by dropping a little jam on to the refrigerated plate. Place back in the fridge, wait one minute to see whether it's begun to set, in which case you can start filling your jars.
6. If it has not reached setting point continue to boil rapidly, checking for a set every four minutes or so.
7. When the jam has set, remove from the heat and discard the ginger.
8. Allow the jam to stand for a few minutes, then pour into the sterilised jars.
9. Cover with screw top lids.
10. Label when cold.



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